

MY QUEEN

A WEEKLY JOURNAL FOR YOUNG WOMEN

No. 2.

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MARION MARLOWE'S COURAGE OR A BRAVE GIRL'S STRUGGLE FOR LIFE AND HONOR



BY GRACE SHIRLEY

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MARION MARLOWE'S COURAGE;

OR,

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By GRACE SHIRLEY.

CHAPTER I.

A BOARDING-HOUSE EXPERIENCE.

"How much money have we left, Marion?"

"Nine dollars and seventy-five cents, but don't worry, sister! We'll obtain more from somewhere, I'm sure. We cannot certainly be going to starve in a great big city, full, as it is, of wealth and happiness!"

Dollie Marlowe sighed disconsolately. She was not so hopeful as her sister Marion.

The two girls were seated in a top floor room of a cheap boarding-house, where they had gone only a day or two after Dollie's rescue from the clutches of Professor Dabroski, the hypnotist, who had abducted her from her home in the country.

Both girls were dressed in simple home-made frocks, the same that they had worn when they first came to the city, but although their garments were coarse and absolutely destitute of style they could not disguise the natural beauty of the two maidens.

The girls were twins, but they did not look

at all alike, except in the general characteristics of their features.

Dollie's golden curls were bewitching as a fairy's, and her blue eyes sparkled even through her tears, while Marion's fair face was sweet and charming in spite of the anxieties to which she had been subjected. For Marion's first visit to the city had been full of adventure. On her arrival she had been sent to the wrong address by Emile Vorse, a fiend in the attire of a gentleman, who had seen her at the station, and only rescued from the insults of another fiend by a Miss Ray, who was kept almost a prisoner in the apartments to which Vorse sent Marion.

Miss Ray had confided to her that she had been entrapped through a mock marriage and only remained quiet for the sake of her family, but Marion had induced her to run away, and the young woman was now safe in the bosom of her family.

After this experience came the rescue of Dollie from her abductor, and then, without funds or friends, the girls took up their brave

struggle for existence in a city which shows but little mercy to the poor or the unfortunate.

For two weeks they had occupied this shabby room, which they obtained, with their board, for eight dollars per week, and during this time poor Marion had been very busy, for it was chiefly her information that secured the indictment against her sister's abductor.

"Thank goodness there's nothing more to be done in that direction," she said, wearily. "That dreadful Mr. Lawson, or 'Dabroski,' as he calls himself, is safe in jail, and the Chief of Police tells me that it will be some time before he is brought to trial. Justice is so slow," she added, plaintively, "but then, it is sure, so there's no use in getting impatient. I've been to seven places to-day in my search for work. Oh, I am sure I will get something soon! I don't see how I can help it!"

"You are just wearing yourself out, dearie," said Dollie, remorsefully. "You look a lot older than you did at home. Oh, dear, to think that I should be the cause of all your worry!"

"Hush, Dollie!" cried Marion, "you are not to blame, sister, and, oh, I am so glad that it isn't any worse!"

Her beautiful face flushed scarlet as she made this admission.

Dollie's blue eyes filled with tears and her lids drooped heavily.

"It's bad enough, I am sure, but please don't speak of it. You love me just the same, don't you, sister?" she cried, piteously.

Her loving sister rushed over to her and kissed her penitently.

"Forgive me, dear, but I can't help thinking of it sometimes! It is perfectly awful, and to think the papers are full of it!"

"They have been for two weeks," said Dollie, sighing, "but they have been so kind in their judgment of me, I can never be too grateful to them. Still, I am glad we changed our names when we came to this house! If our fellow-boarders knew who we were they would probably snub us!"

"Well," cried her noble sister, scornfully, "I should not care for that. We have done

no wrong, why should we be scorned by them?"

"It is the way of the world, I guess," said Dollie, sadly, "for even my own father and mother condemned me before they knew I was guilty."

"Oh, just hear this!" cried Marion, who had picked up the evening paper; "poor Mr. Ray's father was buried to-day! The grief has killed him! And what do you think, Miss Ada Ray's lover has thrown her over, and all on account of her sister's misfortunes! Oh, I can hardly believe it! It is too utterly abominable!"

She threw down the paper in a burst of anger. She could not tolerate injustice, it made her furious to think of it.

"I expect that is why we have seen nothing of Mr. Ray this week," said Dollie. "The poor old father, he must have been over-sensitive, for if his daughter was innocent he should not have grieved so. As for that fellow who professed to be a lover, why, he must have been a good-for-nothing to do a thing like that. She's lucky to be rid of him!" she added, with unusual spirit.

But Marion was walking the floor in a perfect frenzy of indignation. She clenched her hands together as she thought over what she had just read.

"Mr. Ray, our dear, good friend. Oh, I am so sorry for him!" she cried. "He is going to take his two sisters abroad immediately. He has to, I can see that. It would be dreadful for them to stay here."

"And we won't see him again," said Dollie, almost ready to cry.

Marion bit her lips and her gray eyes grew almost hard with agony.

"I'm afraid not," she said, shortly; "the paper says he is to sail to-morrow."

There was a sharp rap on the door, and Marion composed herself quickly and opened it.

The stout, coarse figure of the landlady completely blocked the doorway.

"Good-evening, Mrs. Garvin," said the young girl, politely, then as she observed the woman's expression she stood still and stared at her.

"You are a nice pair, I must say!" began the boarding-house keeper angrily. "To

think of the likes of you comin' into my house! You've got nerve and to spare, Miss Marion Marlowe!"

She glanced at the sisters as she spoke, but as neither of them answered she went on with her vituperations.

"Did you think because you gave your names as Miller that the truth wouldn't leak out? Well, that shows how much you know, you little ninnies! Why, I'd have caught on myself if I ever read the papers! The description of you would have given me the tip at once if I'd happened to see it!"

"If you had read the papers you would have seen that we were not to blame for our misfortunes," said Marion, coldly; "but you cannot blame us for not wishing to be known. We are only simple country girls, we do not wish to be stared at as curiosities."

"Oh, I guess you ain't so simple as you look," sneered the woman. "Girls that run away from home with city chaps ain't so very simple, or innocent either."

"Hush!" cried Marion, sternly, "not another word, madam! You are talking about something which you do not understand! This is my room, and I insist upon being treated with courtesy."

Marion's cheeks glowed like fire as she glared back at the woman. For Dollie's sake she would as readily have confronted the very demon of evil himself.

"And this is my house, and I want you to leave it!" was the woman's prompt answer. "I'll not harbor such creatures another night, if I know it!"

Marion took a step forward, her face becoming covered with a death-like pallor.

"Another word if you dare!" she said in a vibrating whisper.

The woman glanced sharply at the set lips and gleaming eyes, and seeing something in the young girl's manner that thrilled her cowardly soul, she shrank back with a movement that took her over the threshold.

As quick as a flash Marion shut the door in her face.

"You shall get out to-night!" screamed the woman through the door.

Marion opened the door again and faced her sternly.

"I paid you eight dollars to-day for a

week's board in advance. We shall be ready to go when you have returned my money!"

"You'll not get a cent!" roared the woman, furiously. "You shall go out penniless, you brazen hussies!"

Marion's lips curved in a disdainful smile as she closed the door.

"You heard what I said, madam," was her only answer.

CHAPTER II.

A WOMAN REPORTER.

Five minutes later there was another tap on Marion's door. She opened it at once without the slightest hesitation.

"Oh, it is you, Miss Allyn. Come in," she said pleasantly. "We are just packing up, but, as you see, it will not take us long. Do sit down, and Dollie and I will be through in a minute."

The young lady who had entered was a woman of striking appearance. She was about twenty-five, of medium height, but not at all handsome. The attractive feature about her was the shrewdness in her eyes, which were as keen as an eagle's, and yet perfectly frank and fearless.

"I heard that old termagant talking to you just now," she said, bluntly, "and I came to pat you on the shoulder, Miss Miller. Don't you budge an inch until she gives you back your money."

"I wouldn't if it wasn't for Dollie," said Marion, sighing. "I can't permit Dollie to be insulted, and if you overheard the conversation you know who we are, Miss Allyn."

"I've known it ever since you came here," said Miss Allyn, pleasantly, "and I've been hoping that she wouldn't get on to it."

"You knew and yet you did not tell?" cried both Dollie and Marion together.

"What do you take me for?" was the answer, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Don't you think I know enough to mind my business, and, besides, is there anything about me that looks like a snake?"

"No, indeed, there is not," said Marion, promptly, "but most women would have thought it fine to be able to tell such a secret."

"Humph!" sneered Miss Allyn. "That's why I despise women. They'd die if they

couldn't talk, and talk always makes trouble."

"I guess you are right," said Marion, as she snapped the catch of the little hair trunk which the police had rescued for her from the apartment in "The Norwood." It was all the girls had in the way of baggage, but it held their seanty wardrobe nicely.

Another loud rap on the door clearly indicated that the landlady had returned.

Miss Allyn winked at Marion and then opened the door herself, confronting Mrs. Garvin in the most unconcerned manner.

"What, you in here, Miss Allyn!" said the landlady, sneeringly. "Well, if I was you I'd be a little more choicer in my associates."

"Would you now?" said Miss Allyn, who was chewing gum vigorously.

"Yes, I would," snapped the woman, "but perhaps you don't know who these two innocent-looking creatures are. They're them Marlowe girls that's been made notorious of late in the papers."

"You don't say!" said Miss Allyn, still chewing vigorously. Her extraordinary manner made her audience stare a little.

"I didn't know it 'til to-day that I was harborin' such critters, but out they go to-night. I won't keep 'em a day longer. My house is respectable. I don't want no——"

"Hold on Mrs. Garvin!" said Miss Allyn with a sudden ring in her voice, "you are 'barking up the wrong tree' this time, old lady! I'm better acquainted with your boarders than you think, perhaps. Do you want me to tell you the class of people you are harboring?"

Mrs. Garvin's red face grew paler as she listened, but she was too thoroughly angry to think of being prudent.

"There's no one in my house but honest people," she began, but Miss Allyn stopped her with an imperious gesture.

"There's one detective, one rogue and one sneak thief," she said quietly, "besides an actor, two actresses and a red-headed grass widow. Not that I blame her hair, Mrs. Garvin. I'd turn pale, too, if I was in such close company to the widow."

Mrs. Garvin's eyes nearly popped out of her head. She had not dreamed of any one having such "dead wood" on her boarders,

for if there was anything wrong about any of them she had been paid not to know it.

"Now if these poor girls could have given you an extra ten now and then you wouldn't have taken such a dislike to them," went on Miss Allyn, quietly, "but as they happen to be poor and you happen to know it you are going to kick them out of your house this evening."

"And with a week's board in advance in her pocket, too!" broke in Marion, "but is it really true, Miss Allyn, about the other boarders?"

"As true as gospel," said Miss Allyn, calmly, "but don't you wish to know who the sneak thief is, Mrs. Garvin?"

The landlady reddened to the roots of her hair.

"What's your business, anyhow?" she snapped, turning upon Miss Allyn, furiously.

"My business is minding other people's," said Miss Allyn, smiling; "or, in other words I am a newspaper reporter."

"Oh! oh!" gasped Mrs. Garvin, almost shaking in her shoes. "So you've been spying on my boarders while you lived in my house! Oh, it's a nice business, that! A sneaking, prying occupation!"

"It pays," said Miss Allyn, with a shrug of her shoulders, "but come on, old lady, pony up that eight dollars. You don't want me filling up my paper with what I know about you, do you?"

"You don't dare!"

Mrs. Garvin made her last effort to frighten her boarder, but a contemptuous glance was Miss Allyn's only answer.

"We will not go one step until we get it," said Marion, calmly. "So you can take your choice, Mrs. Garvin, it is a week's board or our money back."

"Well, take it and get out!" cried the woman furiously, as she drew some bills from her pocket and flung them at Marion.

Miss Allyn picked them up and counted them carefully.

"We will go together," she said a minute later, when Mrs. Garvin had slammed the door and gone off fuming with anger.

"What, you will leave this house because of her ill treatment of us! Oh, Miss Allyn,

don't think of it! It will give you too much trouble!"

"Nonsense," said Miss Allyn, "I intended to go to-morrow. It won't take me an hour to pack my things."

"But where will we go? It is nearly nine o'clock," said Dollie, anxiously.

"The lame and the lazy are always provided for," quoted Miss Allyn, merrily. "We'll take furnished rooms, I guess, for the present. To Bedlam with boarding-houses! I always did hate them!"

The girls dragged their little hair trunk into Miss Allyn's room to be sure of its safety, taking only what they would need for the night in a paper bundle.

"She can't touch our trunks, that's one good thing," said Miss Allyn. "My board is paid for two days longer and I'll send an expressman for the trunks in the morning."

"You are a wonderful woman," said Marion, as they started out.

"Well, I'm not a howling success in all lines of business," said Miss Allyn, dryly, "but if I am given half a show I'm a dandy 'bluffer.' Now I wonder who the sneak thief was at Mrs. Garvin's anyway!"

"What!" cried Marion, with a ludicrous expression of dismay, "Do you mean to say that you made that sneak thief up, that there was no such person in the house, Miss Allyn?"

"Sure," was Miss Allyn's brief but expressive answer! "But I guess I hit it pretty pat, all right. If I had described the fellow in detail Mrs. Garvin would not have recognized him any quicker."

CHAPTER III.

THE SEARCH FOR EMPLOYMENT.

There was no difficulty whatever in finding a couple of furnished rooms, and Marion and Dollie were soon located with Miss Allyn for a neighbor.

"It's lots more fun than boarding," said Dollie, enthusiastically, as she made coffee and toast for their breakfast the first morning.

"If we only had work we would be perfectly happy here," answered Marion, "and who knows what a day may bring forth, little

sister? I may come home to-night with a good position in my pocket."

"It wouldn't be a very big one if you could get it in your pocket," laughed Dollie, and then a sudden thought made her stare silently at her sister.

"Well, what's wrong with me, Dollie? Isn't my hat on straight?" asked Marion.

"I was thinking," was Dollie's answer in a very low tone. "Wouldn't it be better if you were to wear the dress that Miss Ray gave you, Marion? You wouldn't look so—so green, and perhaps some one would employ you."

Marion burst out laughing at Dollie's frank description, but she shook her head at the wise proposition.

"No, Dollie, they must employ me just as I am," she said decidedly, "and, besides, dear, I should hate to wear the dress again. It would remind me of the first night I spent in New York when that villain Emile Vorse sent me to the wrong address and I was only saved from a monster by that dear, dear woman."

"What became of Vorse?" asked Dollie, absently.

"He eluded the police and made his escape," said Marion, sadly. "It's a pity, for he was an awful creature. But the other, Miss Ray's deceiver, is safely in jail. He was intoxicated and unconscious in his apartments when the detectives found him."

"Poor Miss Ray," sighed Dollie, "her lot is worse, by far, than mine. That man must have been a fiend, just like Mr. Lawson."

"Hush! Don't speak that name. You know we promised, Dollie. Neither the name Carlos Lawson, nor his alias, Professor Dabroski, must rest on our lips any oftener than is necessary. But Dollie, now I remember it, Bert Jackson is coming to see us. I met him yesterday on Broadway, and told him where we were. You must write him at once, dear, and tell him our new address."

"Poor Bert, he has had a hard row, too," sighed Dollie, "but I guess he's safe now, for he's secured a fairly good position in that office. Oh, I wish every boy at the Poor Farm could be as lucky."

"So do I," said Marion, her eyes filling with tears. "Those poor boys! I am almost

home-sick, Dollie, whenever I think of them."

"I would like to go home, too," said Dollie, sadly. "I'd like to see mother, and Samantha, and the chickens, but, oh, I would dread to see father or Silas Johnson."

"Well we won't go back to the country at present," said Marion, firmly, "not until we are convinced that there is no place for us in the city."

"I shall go out this afternoon," called Dollie, as Marion tripped down the stairs. "I saw an advertisement in the paper that I am going to answer."

"Be careful, Dollie," was her sister's reply, "and don't forget to wear a veil, dear. That pretty face of yours is a great temptation to wicked men."

Dollie went back into their room just as Miss Allyn came through the hall.

"There'll be a typewriter here for you to-day," she said glibly. "I ordered it sent. I want you to learn to operate it."

"Oh, thank you," said Dollie, clapping her hands. "I've heard of them so often. I shall be delighted to see one."

"Well, I'll teach you to use it in off hours," said Miss Allyn, kindly. "There's no harm in learning, and it may come in handy."

She was in a hurry to go out to fill an engagement for her paper, so Dollie did not detain her, but busied herself in tidying up the room, and then wrote the letter to Bert Jackson.

When the letter was ready, she put on her hat and gloves and started out to look for work, carrying the advertisement that she had clipped from the paper in order not to forget the address given.

She read it over as she walked along. It sounded very alluring to her unsuspecting ears, and she smiled a little at her cleverness in not showing it to Marion.

"What a surprise it will be to her if I get it," she whispered. Then once more she took out the clipping and read it over.

"Wanted—Twenty young ladies with musical ability. Must be over sixteen and have graceful figures. Room 1019, Dusenbury Building."

"I am sure my figure is graceful enough," she said. "Of course, I never did wear cor-

sets, but I suppose I could. I expect they would make my waist a little smaller."

She put her hands on her hips as she walked along. She was a trifle more plump than the girls she had seen about the city. After considerable trouble she found the Dusenbury Building. It was a grim-looking structure, and a regular sky-scraper.

Dollie was rushed up to the top floor at such speed that it made her head swim a little. She had not begun to get used to the velocity exhibited by an ambitious elevator.

She wandered around the halls for some little time before she finally discovered a door with the number 1019 on it.

She tapped on the door gently, but there was no response except a giggle or two from some one within, so summoning her courage she pushed it open. There were a dozen young ladies in the room, apparently waiting for some one.

"Come right in, don't be bashful," cried one frowsy-headed girl. "His job-lots is passing on a strawberry blonde. He'll be out in a minute. They are in the private office."

The other girls all tittered as Dollie smiled pleasantly. She sat down on the edge of a chair, with her heart beating wildly.

"What do you suppose his game is, anyway?" asked one of the girls in a low voice.

"Is it straight, do you think, or just another case of flim-flam?"

"Give it up," was the answer from the girl addressed. "Wait 'til blondie comes out. I hope it's straight, tho'."

She sighed as she spoke and Dollie glanced at her quickly. She was pale and thin, and there was a hectic flush on her hollow cheeks. There was no shadow of doubt that she was a victim of consumption.

Just then one of the girls who was sitting near the door to the private office, gave a little scream.

"What do you think of that, girls! He's got another door. We won't so much as get a squint at blondie."

"That settles it, we've got to go in and face the music," said the consumptive, "and if he insults us, we must smile and put up with it, of course. If we yell, he'll call in an officer and have us arrested for blackmail."

The words were hardly out of her mouth

before the private door opened, and a flashily-dressed man of about fifty years came out, twirling the ends of an enormous mustache.

There was not a sound from the girls as he looked them over, although they each posed involuntarily and tried to look attractive.

Suddenly his eye fell on Dollie, and he stared in amazement. The girl's fresh beauty astonished him, it was so entirely unexpected.

"Ahem! You will please step this way," he said to her at once, at the same time indicating by a wave of his hand that she was to enter his private office.

"I was here first," said one of the girls, shrilly.

"I've been here an hour," said another, wearily.

"I will attend to you all in a few moments," said the man, pompously, as he stepped into the office behind Dollie and closed the door after them.

CHAPTER IV.

SILAS JOHNSON'S PROPOSAL.

Ten minutes later, when Dollie Marlowe emerged from the private door, her face was flushed and her eyes were blazing.

"The whole thing was a hoax!" she whispered over and over. "That man lured us all there for no purpose but to insult us."

"I guess that is right," said a voice at Dollie's side.

The young girl looked around quickly and recognized the consumptive.

"I got tired of waiting," went on the girl, "besides, I had a presentiment that the thing was all a hoax, but just for the joke of the thing, do tell me what he said to you."

There was a tone in her voice that awakened Dollie's sympathy. It was plain that the girl was both discouraged and disappointed.

"He told me he would make an actress of me, put me on the stage, make me famous, and all that, but he expected me to pay him for my tuition. The idiot! As if I had any money to spend that way," cried Dollie, indignantly.

"Is that all he said?" asked the other girl,

slyly. "I don't believe you'd be so mad if that had been his only proposition."

Dollie's anger was so violent that she was glad to relieve it, and the young girl looked so sympathetic that she didn't mind telling her.

"He told me I would have to wear tights," she stammered, furiously, "and, oh, he said a lot more, but I cannot repeat it."

The sick girl burst into a roar of bitter laughter.

"Same old gag," she said, shortly. "Well, I'm glad I didn't tarry. No danger of his interesting himself in my direction."

"It was disgusting," said Dollie, who could not understand her laughter.

"I'd have given a dollar to have heard you go for him," said the girl, looking at her admiringly.

"I didn't dare to say very much," said Dollie, more quietly, "I remembered what you said about his having us arrested."

"You learn quickly," said the companion, "do you live in New York?"

"I am here with my sister, and we have no money," said Dollie, frankly. "We are trying to get work, that is why I came here this morning."

"Haven't you any friends who can help you?" asked the girl, with interest.

"Not a soul," said Dollie, her lips quivering a little. "I don't know what we will do. We can't live without money."

They walked on together for a moment in silence, then the sick girl spoke in a cautious manner.

"Mr. Max, that man you just left, has money, I suppose, and he looks like a man who would spend it freely."

"Well, what of it?" asked Dollie, turning to stare a little.

"I was wondering whether you were wise; you are without friends or money. Don't you think his proposition was worth considering?"

"What! pay him for teaching me to act!" cried Dollie.

"No, I didn't mean that," said the sick girl, slowly, "but——"

"You needn't go on. I understand you," said Dollie, her lips curling a little. "Do you

think because I am poor I would stoop to dishonor?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders and turned away.

"When you have worn yourself out, soul and body, as I have, you will understand better," she said wearily. "I have lived an honest life, but what thanks have I for it?"

"You have your own self-respect," cried Dollie, taking a step toward her.

"Poor food for a starved stomach," said the girl, half smiling, "but, good-by and good luck, my little rustic."

Dollie stood still for a moment and looked after the girl. The tears had sprung to her eyes, and were trembling on her lashes.

"Poor soul," she whispered, with a heavy sigh. "Poor, weary girl. Oh, how I pity her. Then there is starvation and want in this great city of plenty."

She walked on after this, thinking deeply as she went, but never quite forgetting that she must be alert and watchful.

For although Professor Dabroski was safely in jail, there were times when Dollie almost trembled with dread. It seemed as if his fatal spell was still haunting her senses.

As she turned into the block that led to their furnished room, she came suddenly in sight of a familiar figure, which made her stand for a moment as if rooted to the spot, while the blood coursed through her veins in a perfect torrent.

A young man, with a gaunt, angular figure, dressed in butternut colored garments, a bandana handkerchief around his neck, and a wide brimmed straw hat upon his head, was standing about half way down the block, staring up at the houses in a gawky manner. Dollie knew him at once. It was Silas Johnson, their next door neighbor at home in the country.

This man was the husband whom her father had chosen for her—the man whom she had solemnly vowed she would never marry.

What was he doing in New York?

Dollie asked herself the question. It was not possible that Silas should meet her now after her fearful experience with Professor Dabroski. Before she had fairly recovered from her surprise, Silas Johnson saw her and

came striding along the pavement, mopping his forehead vigorously with another bandana.

"So here's where ye be!" was his extraordinary greeting. "I told yer folkes I'd find ye an' tell 'em how ye wuz livin'."

"Are they so anxious about us?" asked Dollie, faintly. "I should have thought if they were anxious they might have answered our letters, for both Marion and I have written to mother."

Silas Johnson eyed her curiously before he answered, much as if she were a stranger instead of the girl he had known from childhood.

"Waal, yew kain't blame 'em fer not bein' over pertik'lar about hearin'," he said, bluntly. "When a gal's run away an' disgraced her fam'ly it's ag'in natur not ter resent it a leetle."

Dollie Marlowe blushed to the roots of her hair.

"Is that what you came to say to me, Sile?" she asked, hotly. "If it is, I'll go on, for I'm tired and hungry."

"No, tain't all," said Silas, with a peculiar leer. "I've got sumthin' else tew say tew ye, but I calkulate the street is no place tew say it."

"It will have to do, Silas," said Dollie, decidedly, "for Marion is not at home, and I cannot ask you in. There is no one to hear; quick, what else have you to say to me?"

"Waal, ef I must, I must," was the drawling answer, "tho' tain't exac'ly the place fer a man ter pop thier question."

"What do you mean, Silas?" asked Dollie, sharply.

"Oh, I knew yew'd be surprised," said the fellow, arrogantly. "'Tain't every respecter-ble man thet ud want ye, Dollie, but I'm willin' ter take ye an' dew what's right by ye. Yew see, I've got a five hundred dollar mortgage on yer father's farm that'll fall due in Janooary, an' if yew'll marry me, Dollie, I'll give him ther paper; but ef yew won't —"

"What, then?" asked Dollie, trembling.

"Then I'll foreclose on him an' turn 'em out," was the decided answer. "It's yew or the money, an' the deacon ain't got no money."

CHAPTER V.

A SAD PARTING OF FRIENDS.

When Dollie burst into the little room she was breathless with excitement and indignation. Much to her surprise, she found Marion there before her.

"Oh, sister!" she blurted out, "Silas Johnson is here! And what do you think! he still wants me to marry him!"

Marion stared at her in genuine astonishment. "What! Silas here in the city, and you have seen him, Dollie?"

"I met him in this very block just as I was coming home," said Dollie, pulling off her gloves, "and, oh, of all the awkward-looking gawks! I never realized before that Silas was so homely!"

"That is because you had never seen stylish men before you came to New York," said Marion, quickly; "I find myself comparing every one I ever met with Mr. Ray—city men are so handsome—and then they dress so much better."

"Silas had on a flannel shirt and cowhide shoes," went on Dollie, laughing, "and I never before believed that they could look so ugly! But listen, Marion, he says he has a mortgage for five hundred dollars on father's farm, but that as he thinks I could save him that amount in time he is willing to let it go if I will marry him!"

"He expects you to earn it weeding gardens, milking cows and churning butter, I suppose," said Marion scornfully.

"But, sister, just think! Where will father get the money? He can never, never pay Silas such an amount, and he'll turn them out if he doesn't get the money!"

"Turn them out of the old homestead!" exclaimed Marion, turning pale. "The thing is outrageous! He must never do it! Never!"

"Then I'll have to marry him," said Dollie, dolefully. "There's no other way to settle the matter."

"I'm not so sure," said her sister, shutting her white teeth together. "There are nearly three months before the mortgage is due. I must think a little, Dollie; but hush! Here comes Miss Allyn!"

Miss Allyn came in, carrying the type-

writer in her arms, and for the next hour the girls almost forgot their troubles.

"I'll learn just as fast as I can," said Dollie, clapping her hands.

"And I'll do my best to get you a position," said Miss Allyn, kindly, "but I warn you it will be with some old codger who has a red-headed wife to look after him! You shall not have any champagne luncheons and *tele-a-teles* with your employer if I can prevent it!"

"What do you mean?" asked both girls together.

"Just this," said Miss Allyn, with her characteristic brevity—"a pretty typewriter is often looked upon as lawful prey by some men who employ one in their private office. I know some typewriter girls who tell me that they go to business in a regular mask—don't dare wink or smile for fear they'll be tangled up in a divorce suit. Of course it is not so in all cases, but a working girl must keep her eyes open in a big city. There's more temptation to the square inch than you get in ten miles in the country. Look out, girls! Take my advice, wear green veils over those pretty faces."

"Thank you for your good advice," said Marion, sadly; "we have already learned that there are many pitfalls in the city, but with a friend like you we are forewarned, Miss Allyn. Oh, how fortunate we are to have won your sympathy."

"Nonsense!" said Miss Allyn, as she started for the door. "I'm only a poor reporter doing space work for my living. It's not in my power to be a friend to any one except to give them a few points on the things I am most familiar with, and they are—the ways of the world and the wiles of the wicked."

She went out laughing, and just then there came a peal at the bell. Marion ran out and looked over the banisters, and then ran down to greet Mr. Ray and his sister.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you!" she cried as she hugged and kissed Miss Ray—"I was so afraid you would go away without coming to see me."

Mr. Ray shook hands with Dollie and then turned to Marion. He seemed older and sadder than she had ever seen him. Not much like the gay-hearted young man who

had befriended her so bravely on that eventful day when she rescued poor Dollie.

"We are going abroad for a time," he said, simply. "Now that father is dead I think it is best. A year or two abroad, and, perhaps, some of our griefs will be forgotten."

As Marion glanced at their robes of mourning she could hardly keep back the tears. These were her only friends in the big city, and now she was going to lose them.

"I think you are wise," she managed to say, at last, "poor Miss Ray will be benefited greatly by the change. It must be dreadful for her here, when every one knows of her wretched experience."

"It is indeed," was the answer, as Mr. Ray glanced lovingly at his sister. Miss Ray was talking with Dollie and had not heard their words, but she came over and joined them before Marion could answer.

"My poor sister Ada is heartbroken," she said, sadly. "Just think! She has lost her lover, and all through me. I feel terribly about it, and yet I think she is lucky."

"She is indeed!" said her brother, promptly, "I can't imagine a fellow being such a cad as to throw over a sweet girl just because of something unpleasant in the life of her sister."

He looked at Marion as he spoke, and as their eyes met she blushed charmingly. Such eloquent glances as Mr. Ray's needed no interpreter of their meaning.

"Oh! I despised him as soon as I read of it!" broke in Dollie, impulsively. "She is well rid of him, poor girl. I hope she will get over it quickly."

"If a brother's love will help her to forget him, he will not be remembered long," said Mr. Ray, nobly.

Marion gave him a glance that set his blood to tingling. He was radiantly happy to see how well she understood him.

The girls all wept as they said good-by, and even the young man's eyes looked suspiciously moist as he took leave of the two sisters.

Miss Ray slipped something into Dollie's hand at the last. Dollie tried to remonstrate, but was checked emphatically.

"A reminder of my gratitude to your sis-

ter," Miss Ray whispered; "but for her I would still be living a life of disgrace and torture. She saved me. I can never forget it!"

"Good-by, Miss Marlowe; Marion!" whispered Mr. Ray very gently. "You shall hear from us after, and some day I shall be back, then——"

He pressed her hand in both his own, while Marion's eyes fell beneath the glance that was so ardent and so tender.

"Good-by, Marion. God bless you," whispered Miss Ray, taking Marion in her arms.

"Good-by, dear brave girl, and may the angels guard you. They ought to, my dear, for you are one of their number."

CHAPTER VI.

MARION'S CLEVER TRICK.

"Just see what she gave me!" said Dollie, after their guests had gone and the girls had wiped their eyes and recovered a little from the parting. She opened her hand and showed a fifty dollar bill. For a moment Marion's face flushed, and she was annoyed and indignant.

"You shouldn't have taken it, Dollie," she said, sharply.

Dollie hurriedly repeated Miss Ray's words when she offered it, and Marion's flush of resentment faded in an instant.

"The dear girl! It was lovely of her!" she said, very softly. "If that was the spirit of her offering, I accept it gratefully."

The girls ate their supper with saddened hearts. They were sorrowing for Miss Ray and her noble brother, as well as worrying over the fate which much soon overtake their own father and mother.

"I can't bear to think of their losing the farm," Marion said over and over, with tears in her eyes. "Mother is such a weak, helpless woman and father is so old. Oh! it makes my blood boil to think of it, and yet I cannot help it!"

"Father can hardly expect us to help him," said Dollie, sadly. "He has never written us once, nor will he allow mother to do so. If he were a little less hard-hearted I think I should feel worse about it, Marion."

"We must not think of that," said Marion.

decidedly. "They are our parents, dear; we must try to help them."

"But how?" asked Dollie, in great perplexity.

Marion's eyes grew thoughtful as she answered slowly:

"I don't know how exactly, but it must be done! I must help my father pay off that mortgage!"

"This money will only last about a month," said Dollie, who was doing a little figuring. "but Oh, Marion, I am sure we shall have work before then! But tell me, what did you do to-day? I have had no time to ask you before."

"I went to five places," said Marion, promptly. "I offered my services as laundress, chambermaid and waitress; then I tried an employment bureau, which was a regular fraud, by the way, and two applications in dry goods stores completed my day's work, Dollie."

"Poor Marion! You must be tired and discouraged!" said Dollie, impulsively.

"Tired of fraud and humbug!" was Marion's quick answer. "Sick and tired of sham, hypocrisy and deceit!" she said again. "Why, do you know, Dollie; two of those advertisements that I answered were merely catch traps to get your money! Instead of having positions to offer, they merely tell you they can get you one provided you pay them for their trouble!"

Dollie burst out laughing as Marion finished, but the laugh was unnatural; there was not an atom of mirth in it.

"I had a little experience of my own to-day," she said, hysterically. "Oh, Marion, it was awful! I don't know why I laugh! Sometimes I can't help it though, for things in New York are so miserably funny!"

"Better laugh than cry! But tell me what you did," said Marion, quickly. "Oh, Dollie, I hope you didn't get into any serious trouble."

"Well, if I did, I got out of it," said Dollie, sobering a little. Then she told her sister the story of her visit to the private office. Just as she was finishing the door bell rang.

Marion lighted the gas in their room and then went to the stairs to listen.

"It's Bert Jackson! Oh, Bert, come right up!" she cried, gayly. "I'm delighted to see you, but for goodness sake what is the matter?"

She had just caught sight of the boy's white face, and without another word she drew him into the room and closed the door behind them.

"They're after me—the Poor Farm people!" whispered Bert, more in anger than in fright. "Matt Jenkins has heard where I am and he's seen my employer. I had to run away, and just when I had a nice position!"

"It's just too mean for anything!" cried Dollie, angrily. "Matt Jenkins is a brute! You shall not go back to him!"

"I'll never forget how he struck you once when your arm was broken," said Marion, slowly. "He was not fit to be keeper of the Poor Farm—he ought to be in prison!"

"Well, I'll have to go back to him if they catch me," muttered Bert, "and he'll flog me every day for two years, I suppose. You know I was to stay there until I was eighteen—so much for being an orphan! Any one would think I was a criminal!"

Marion's mouth was curving in hard lines now, very much as it had curved when she was planning the search for her sister. She pondered intently a moment or two, then her sister knew by her voice that she had thought out a solution.

"Is Matt here looking for you, Bert?" she asked, very softly.

"I think so," said the boy, "and I saw Silas Johnson here, too. One of the boys at the office said a man had been there looking for me. He described him accurately. I am sure it was Matt Jenkins."

"What did your employer do?" asked Marion again.

Bert's eyes snapped with pleasure as he drew a ten dollar bill from his pocket.

"He gave me this and told me I'd be safer somewhere else," he answered, smiling. "Oh, it was lucky I was out when Matt Jenkins called on him!"

"He gave you good advice," said Marion, "and I repeat it, Bert; you'd be safer somewhere else than in our room to-night, for Silas Johnson knows we live here, and he's

likely to come here. You must go away quick, but, where, is the question."

"I won't leave New York!" said Bert, determinedly.

"You won't have to," said Marion. "You can easily hide in this big city. You must change your name and go to some lodging house for the present, then you must look for another job while you have the ten dollars, and Dollie and I will find some way to come and see you."

"I know a place where I can go," said Bert. "It's way over to the East Side, and I can get room and board for three dollars."

"Then go quickly," said Marion, "but leave the address, and remember your name is to be Bert Wilson."

"I'll remember," said Bert, grinning, as he scribbled the address.

He started down the stairs saying good-by to the girls cheerily.

In two minutes he was back, his eyes flashing with anger.

"They are out there, Matt Jenkins and Siie," he whispered, "and they are coming in here just as sure as shooting!"

"Quick! Get into these, Bert!" cried Marion, sharply.

She sprang to the door and turned the key, then began pulling some clothing out of a valise in the corner.

"It's the suit Miss Ray gave me the first night I met her," she whispered. "The skirt is so long that it will hide your feet and I've got a thick veil that will conceal your features."

Bert pulled off his jacket as quick as a flash. In two minutes he was dressed in Miss Ray's stylish garments.

"They are down at the door talking to the landlady," whispered Dollie, who was listening at the key-hole. "Oh, I am sure they are coming up. Is he ready, Marion?"

Marion grabbed Bert's jacket and cap and tucked them under the mattress, then she gave him some old gloves and drew his veil a little tighter.

"Take short steps and hold your dress up, just a little," she whispered, "now, then, sum up all your courage and pass them without a look. I'll detain them long enough to give you the start of them."

Marion opened the door safely, and Bert slipped out into the hall. There were two men and the landlady on the flight before him.

"He'd come here, sure, if the gals air here," said the well known voice of Matt Jenkins, the keeper of the Poor Farm.

"Waa! the gals air here all right," was Silas Johnson's answer, "an' I allow they know where Bert is right enough. The question is, kin we make 'em tell us?"

"And what will you do with the boy if you catch him?" asked the landlady, anxiously.

"Take him back tew the Poor Farm, where he belongs," said Matt Jenkins. "An' yew bet I'll lick him good fer puttin' me tew all this trouble."

"Oh, you will, will you?" thought Bert, as he started down the stairs.

Marion walked out to the banisters and leaned over calmly.

"Some one looking for me, Mrs. Dean?" she called out, pleasantly. "If it is, they can come right up; my sister and I will be glad to see them."

The landlady turned back with a sigh of relief. She was stout and heavy and climbing stairs was not to her fancy.

"I hain't so sure about yew'r bein' glad tew see us, Marion Marlowe," said Matt Jenkins, dryly.

As he spoke he looked up at the girl, and at that moment Bert passed him.

"You are mistaken, Mr. Jenkins, I shall be delighted," said Marion, smiling. "And Silas, too, why, this is really a great pleasure."

"Then yew'r sentiments haz changed sense I saw yew last," said Matt Jenkins, roaring. "Yew must ter larn't manners sense yew come tew ther city."

"Oh, I've learned lots of things besides manners," said Marion, gayly, "but walk right in to our humble room. I assure you I am really and truly very glad to see you."

Dollie got up smilingly, and greeted the two.

"Our room is not very large," said Marion, politely, "but you can have the chair, and I will sit on the bed."

She winked at Dollie as she seated herself firmly.

If they found Bert's cap and jacket it would be with some difficulty.

CHAPTER VII.

MARION PROVES HERSELF A HEROINE.

"An hour and a half! Well, that isn't so bad. Bert must have had time to get a boarding place by this time."

Marion Marlowe glanced up at the tiny nickel clock as she spoke, and both she and her sister laughed a little nervously.

"I never talked to Silas so much in all my life," said Dollie, merrily. "But I kept thinking of Bert, and just went on talking and talking."

"And how polite I was to that brute, Matt Jenkins," laughed Marion. "Oh, well, we had to do it to save poor Bert. He's well worth the sacrifice we made for him, Dollie."

"I should say so," said Dollie, "but it is awfully late, Marion, and I'm tired and sleepy."

"It seems to me I smell smoke," was Marion's only answer.

She went to the door and opened it cautiously.

Slowly a great volume of smoke came rolling up the stairway.

"The house is on fire! I am sure of it!" cried Marion, sharply. "Oh, Dollie, I wonder if Miss Allyn is in. Quick! Get your hat on dear, while I run and warn her."

Marion was up the stairs like a flash of lightning, and at the same moment there came cries and shrieks from every floor and landing.

"The house is on fire!" echoed from every side, and in an instant the halls were crowded with half-dressed men and women.

Great puffs of smoke came from all directions, and soon the frightened people could hear the woodwork snapping and crackling.

There were shrieks and orders, some hysterical and some calm, but in the excitement no one seemed to know just what to do or which way to go to secure their safety.

Marion pounded vigorously on Miss Allyn's door, but could get no response, although she felt certain that her friend was within.

The smoke choked and stifled her, but she continued her frantic efforts to arouse her

friend, although all the others roomers had disappeared in the darkness.

Suddenly new sounds fell distinctly upon her ear. The fireman had arrived; she could hear them racing up the stairs and shouting.

Just as her strength seemed giving out Miss Allyn opened her door. There was a gust of wind from the open window, then a sudden burst of flame in the hallway.

Marion staggered into the room and slammed the door behind her. In that awful moment she thought suddenly of Dollie.

The house was old and burned as rapidly as tinder. In spite of the furious streams of water that hissed and spurted upon it the flames ate their way ravenously to the very roof, flashing their long tongues of flame out of every window and thrilling with sensations of horror the thousands of spectators who had gathered in the streets.

One by one the roomers had been hurried out by the firemen, one of them carrying Dollie in his arms down the stairs and depositing her safely on the pavement.

"My sister! Oh, my sister!" shrieked Dollie, shrilly. "Oh, save my sister Marion and dear Miss Allyn!"

"Where are they?" asked a fireman who had heard her cry.

"Third floor, back," answered Dollie in an agonized whisper.

The fireman shook his head.

"No use," he muttered sadly. "The rear is gutted. If it was front we might save them."

Suddenly a cry of terror went up from the crowd, then followed shouts of warning from a thousand throats, which were unintelligible to poor frightened Dollie.

The fireman looked up from the hose he was tending.

"My God, don't jump!" he shouted, hoarsely. Dollie looked up and saw her sister standing on the sill of a third story window, her girlish form encircled by wreaths of smoke and long tongues of flame lapping the wall until they almost reached her.

Spell-bound with horror, Dollie stood and gazed as a long ladder was run up by an agile fireman.

The ladder was too short and another was handed up; Dollie meanwhile standing motionless as the crowd shouted about her.

"Quick, now! Jump!" ordered the fireman who had braced himself on the top of the ladder. "Jump right into my arms. Don't be afraid. I'll catch you!"

"Wait!" cried Marion, in clear, ringing tones.

The monster crowd stood silent—holding its breath in wonder.

Slowly and carefully Marion bent and reached into the room, keeping her balance by holding with one hand to the fast blistering casement.

"Her muscles must be like steel," said a voice near Dollie. The young girl did not heed it. Her eyes were riveted upon her sister.

"Then the crowd saw something that made them breathless. Marion was helping Miss Allyn to a place on the sill, and it looked for a moment as if the two girls were arguing with each other.

"Quick! There is no time to lose! Jump!" cried the fireman, sharply.

With a sudden violent motion, Marion pushed Miss Allyn from the sill. She landed squarely in the fireman's arms and was promptly handed down the ladder.

At the next command Marion let go her hold. As she was caught by the fireman a great cheer went up—the crowd had recognized and were rewarding an unusual heroine.

A half hour later Marion opened her eyes. She had fainted and been carried by the crowd to the nearest drug store.

"Not a scratch," said the physician who was bending over her. "She'll be all right in an hour. All she needs is rest and a bath to make her less smoky."

"I looked like a nigger when I first got here," said Miss Allyn, laughing, "but as some one was kind enough to wash my face, I don't feel quite so much like a herring."

"I'm all right," said Marion, with a feeble smile, "and if both of my friends are the same I am more than thankful."

"We are safe and sound," said Miss Allyn, calmly, "but I was as mad as a hornet when you pushed me, Marion. I thought of it myself, but I didn't have the courage to do it."

"If you had I would never have forgiven you," said Marion, laughing. "You had be-

friend me once, it was my turn," she added, then both girls turned solemnly and kissed each other.

"It was perfectly terrible," said Dollie, who had not stopped crying. "I thought I would die when I first saw you, Marion."

"Well, what will we do next?" asked Marion, as the crowd in the drug store dwindled gradually away. "You are so ready with advice, what do you suggest, Miss Allyn? Is there any place in New York for two girls to live who have no positions and not a cent of money?"

"Oh, Marion!" cried Dollie, "I didn't once think of that. Our fifty dollars is burnt up and so is Bert's cap and jacket and Miss Allyn's typewriter."

"Let me think," said Miss Allyn, with a puzzled look. "If I was only dressed now I could go down to the office and get some money, but——" here she looked down at her wrapper and slippers disgustedly.

"You young ladies must let me provide for you," said a gentleman, rushing in. "I have just heard of your bravery and am glad I have found you. Come, let me take you home to my wife for the night, young ladies. It is the least I can do to show my appreciation of such heroism."

The girls all turned and looked at the speaker.

He was an elderly man, with such a kindly face that they were satisfied and glad to accept his kind offer.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOLLIE MEETS AN ADMIRER.

"Hello, Central! Give me 4070 Cortlandt! Hello! Is this the *Star* office? Well, I want Mr. Horton, the city editor."

Miss Allyn was sitting at the telephone in the drug store, while her two friends waited with their kind benefactor.

In spite of her wrapper and slippers Miss Allyn had insisted upon telephoning. The reportorial habit was too strong to be resisted, and furthermore, it was not often she could get an "exclusive" on such a magnificent news item.

"Hello!" she called again. "Is this the New York *Star* editorial rooms? Oh,

howd'y do, Mr. Horton? This is Alma Allyn."

Here followed the news item with true newspaper brevity, Miss Allyn giving such a graphic account of the fire and her rescue that her audience burst out laughing.

"Cail me 'Jane Doe,' or any old thing, Mr. Horton," she wound up, briefly, "only see that I get an 'exclusive' on this. I'm sorry for the fellow at headquarters, but this is mine by rights, I was right 'in it,' you know, so it's bound to be authentic."

There was a moment's silence and then Miss Allyn laughed.

"You'd believe it if you could see me. I'm in my wrapper and slippers, and, oh, yes, just stick this in, we have all three just been invited to spend the night at the home of Samuel Haley, of the Central Mission."

"Oh, no!" gasped the astonished gentleman, who was standing with her friends.

"Can't be helped now," said Miss Allyn, calmly, as she "rang off" her telephone.

"How did you know me?" asked the gentleman, as they started out.

"Why, it popped into my head at that minute," said Miss Allyn, laughing. "I've seen you often, it's funny I didn't recognize you directly."

Only a short walk from the drug store and the gentleman stopped before a neat apartment-house.

He opened the door with his latch key and rang his bell vigorously.

At the top of the first flight of stairs a sweet-faced woman met them. She did not seem in the least surprised at her three strange visitors.

"Some young ladies who have just been burned out of house and home, Lizzie," said her husband, smilingly. "I guess we can put them up somehow for the night, can't we?"

"Bless their hearts, of course we can," was the motherly answer, and the girls were ushered into her apartments without any further ceremony.

"Now this is what I call downright charity," said Marion, as soon as the three girls were alone. "Did you ever in your life see such kindness, Miss Allyn?"

They had all had warm baths and a cup of

tea, and each had been provided with suitable clothing.

"These two people are brimming over with charity," said Miss Allyn, quickly. She was making herself comfortable for the night on a wide sofa, so that the two sisters could sleep in the bed together.

"He's a city missionary and a genuinely good man. There never was a better, if all I've heard of him is true, and his wife is a mother to every poor girl in creation."

"That's downright goodness," said Dollie, firmly. "Half the church people don't do it, nor the ministers either."

"Such goodness as this puts the many professing Christians to the blush," said Miss Allyn, with energy. "There's no cant and no hypocrisy in Samuel Haley's religion."

Bright and early the next morning Miss Allyn started out. Her hostess loaned her some clothing that had been contributed to the mission, and which would go there as soon as Miss Allyn was done with it.

"I guess I'm an object of charity if ever there was one," said Miss Allyn, when she was arrayed in them. "However, I'll be richer by noon by the looks of that paper."

She handed Marion a morning edition of the *New York Star*, and there, sure enough, was a full account of the fire and the words "Marion Marlowe's Heroism" in such big letters that it made the young girl blush to look at them.

Then there were pictures of the fire showing the scene on the window ledge and another which demonstrated how she had pushed Miss Allyn to safety. Altogether it was an array of information which almost staggered her.

"How in the world could they do it so quickly?" she asked her hostess, but before she was answered, there was an unexpected interruption.

A young man came into the room, whom Mrs. Haley introduced as her nephew, Ralph Moore. He was a dark-eyed, curly-haired young fellow, with charmingly courteous manners.

While Marion talked with Mrs. Haley, Ralph Moore and Dollie chatted together. The young man was smitten at once with the country girl's pretty features.

"You will let me come and see you, wherever you go, won't you?" he asked eagerly, as Dollie finished telling him of their experiences at the fire.

Dollie blushed a little, but she promised readily. He was so handsome and agreeable it made her heart flutter to look at him. Before noon their friendship had made rapid headway, for Mrs. Haley and Marion were too busy planning to heed them.

When Miss Allyn came in at noon she had joyful news. The paper had not only paid her well for her excellent story of the fire, but they had given her an extra fifty-dollar bill to help her recuperate from the loss of her wardrobe.

"Now we'll go and find some more furnished rooms," she said, gayly, "and you girls must let me pay your bills until my wealth is gone; meanwhile who knows what may turn up—you may marry millionaires or something."

"How good you are," cried Marion, with tears in her eyes.

"You had better do it, my dear," said Mrs. Haley, kindly. "She is so sweet in offering it, you must not refuse her, then when your fortune has changed you can find some way to repay her."

"And meanwhile, I shall never forget your kindness, Mrs. Haley," said Marion, "and I am coming to see you often if you will let me."

"My door is always open and my heart, too," said Mrs. Haley, laughing. "I am a mother to everybody, or at least that is what they say of me."

"You are, indeed," said Marion, kissing her, "and now we must leave you and go with Miss Allyn."

When Dollie parted from Ralph Moore she was shyer than ever, for the young man's admiration was so plain that it embarrassed her.

"They've been spooning, I'll bet," said Miss Allyn, with a wink. "You'd better look out, Dollie, or I'll put it in the paper."

"Good-by, Miss Dollie," said young Moore with a sly pressure of her hand, "and remember, you have promised to let me come and call. Don't wait too long before sending your address or I shall be rude enough to hunt you up and take the chance of being scolded."

"I guess I wouldn't scold," said Dollie, blushing, "but you must make friends with my sister, she is the ogre of the family."

"She is the bravest girl in the world, and you are the sweetest," whispered Mr. Moore, gallantly. "I only wish I was something besides a poor book-keeper, for then I might be able to help you."

Dollie smiled her thanks, but there was no time to say more, for the others were waiting for her to join them.

Once more they started out in search of furnished rooms, but thanks to Miss Allyn's knowledge of the city, they were soon comfortably settled.

"I'll just run out and get some bread and milk," said Marion, about dusk. "That will do very nicely for our supper, Dollie, for Miss Allyn will be away and I hate to spend her money. Until one of us gets work I shall be as economical as possible."

When Marion reached the street she saw that they were only two blocks from the scene of the fire, so she walked over to look at the ruins.

"Oh, Marion, I'm so thankful you are not burned up. I was nearly crazy when I saw the paper this morning."

Marion turned around quickly and saw Bert Jackson running after her.

"Oh, Bert, I'm so glad to see you," was her cordial answer. "We have a room at 228, do go right over. I'll be back just as soon as I get something for supper."

"I guess I will," said Bert, quickly, "for I'm keeping pretty shady nowadays, Marion; I don't dare stay in the street for fear Matt Jenkins may be after me."

He ran over to the house and Marion hurried to the grocery. She was just coming out with her bread and milk when she came face to face with a half-drunken fellow.

"Ah there, my beauty," said the fellow, impudently, as he caught sight of Marion. "Bless your pretty face, I've seen you somewhere before. Great Scott, but you're a stunner. I'd like to kiss you."

"How dare you!" cried Marion in a frightened voice. "Let me pass at once, sir, or I will call a policeman."

The fellow drew back and Marion darted past him like a flash.

"Where in the world have I seen him?" she muttered to herself. "There's something familiar about him, and yet I can't place him."

CHAPTER IX.

THE GIRLS LOSE A FRIEND.

When Marion returned to her room she found Bert and Dollie chatting merrily.

"Oh, Marion, what do you think? Poor Bert was almost arrested last night. The dress you loaned him came near being the death of him," cried Dollie, gayly.

Marion looked at Bert with a questioning glance.

"A 'cop' followed me two blocks," he said.

with a grin, "but I took to my heels and he was too fat to catch me."

"Oh, my goodness," cried Marion, with a burst of laughter. "How you must have looked, Bert. I wish I could have seen you. I can just imagine Miss Ray's long dress getting over the ground at the speed you would carry it."

"And with a big, fat policeman in hot pursuit," cried Dollie; "but he didn't catch you, and that's the best of it. It must have surprised him to see a woman such a good runner."

"He knew I was a man all right," said Bert, "and I guess he would recommend me as a first-class 'sprinter.' Well, after I had eluded him, I went into a little 'junk-shop' on First avenue, and bought a cap and jacket; of course they were pretty cheap ones, but I was glad to get them. I was mighty sick of masquerading."

"But didn't they know your voice was not a woman's where you bought the things?" broke in Dollie, excitedly.

"Oh, that Jew wouldn't have cared if I had been a dime museum freak. All he wanted was my money. He didn't ask any questions."

"And what then?" asked Marion, who was very much interested.

"Then I sneaked into an alley and made a 'lightning change,'" said Bert, laughing, "and I've got your swell clothes, Marion, all carefully done up in a bundle."

"And you went to the little boarding-house?" asked Marion, again.

"Sure," said Bert, "and I've got a receipt for a week's board in advance in my pocket. Now if I could only get a job I'd be all right," he said, cheerfully, "unless the Poor Farm people keep on chasing me around the city."

"They are mighty interested in you, Bert," said Dollie, slowly. "Other boys have run away and they did not chase them."

"That's just it," said Bert, quickly. "Matt Jenkins is scared to death. He's lost so many boys that he'll lose his job next, that is why he is trying so hard to find some of his truants."

Marion had put the bread and milk on the table, making a place for Bert, and as they all ate their frugal meal she glanced over the evening paper.

"Here is a mention of our beloved aunt and uncle in the society columns," she said, scornfully. "I wonder if they have ever repented of their hard-heartedness to their poor niece."

Bert and Dollie stared at her as she hastened to explain.

"Mother's sister Susan is living at 'The

Norwood,' a fine apartment-house here in the city, and when I came to New York in search of Dollie, I called on them and asked them to help me."

"And they were mean enough to refuse?" asked Bert, indignantly.

"Were they!" cried Marion, her eyes snapping angrily. "Why, they were so shocked at my suggestion that they came near dying on the spot of sheer mortification."

"A couple of empty-headed pugs," said Bert, disgustedly, "but anyhow, you didn't need 'em. You found Dollie all right, Marion."

"Here's a dreadful thing" exclaimed Marion, after a minute. "A boy of sixteen run over by a cable car. He was killed almost instantly, and they have taken him to the morgue. Unless some one claims him he'll be buried in Potter's Field."

"Poor chap," said Dollie, with tears in her eyes. "He may have been a country boy who was not familiar with the city."

"The cars are awful," said Marion, with a sigh. "I always hold my breath when I start over a crossing."

There was a tap on the door and the maid announced a caller. Marion looked at the card, and then handed it to Dollie.

"Ralph Moore," read Dollie, with the blood mantling her pretty face. "Shall we ask him to come upstairs? There is no other place to see him."

Marion stopped a moment and glanced at the table, where the remnants of their frugal supper were still standing.

"Yes, tell him to come up," she said, very firmly. "He may as well see us as we are, then there will be no misunderstanding."

At ten o'clock promptly the two young men left, with Dollie and Mr. Moore more in love than ever.

"I think he is quite the nicest young man I ever saw," said Dollie, candidly. "Don't you think so, yourself? Now be honest, Marion."

"He is very nice" said Marion, quietly, "but I'm almost afraid he is a little wild, not a bit like Mr. Ray who is so steady and settled."

"Pooh," said Dollie, laughing. "I'm glad he is a little gay. I'd awfully hate to have a pokey man around. I'd rather they'd be wild so long as they are not wicked."

"Well, we won't quarrel about them," said Marion, smiling. "We have something else to do besides worrying about lovers."

"But we will both have lovers some day I hope," said Dollie, sighing. "This world would be a dreadfully dull old place if it wasn't for the sweetness of love and lovers."

"You have Silas Johnson," she said, a lit-

tle mischievously. "Do you know I can't understand Silas yet, little sister. I feel that there is something else besides the mortgage that is worrying Silas."

"I was surprised that he should ask me to marry him," said Dollie, sadly. "Men like father and Silas are always unforgiving where women are concerned."

Marion looked at her tenderly. "Never mind about them, little sister," she said very softly. "There is sadness and sorrow enough, Heaven knows. I only hope that we may some day find some one to love and to love us."

As she spoke Marion put her arms around Dollie's waist and laid her head a trifle wearily on the plump, white shoulder.

It was a pretty picture of sisterly devotion, which only their guardian angels witnessed. They were alone in New York, without money or friends, except one poor girl whose heart was bigger than her purse, but who divided with them her every penny gladly.

There was a step on the stairs as the girls extinguished their light, then an agonized voice called to them through the key-hole:

"Girls! Girls! Let me in for just one minute, do!"

Marion opened the door quickly, and admitted Miss Allyn.

"Girls, my mother is dead and I've got to go home," said the little reporter, brokenly.

The next moment she was sobbing on Marion's shoulder.

CHAPTER X.

A DEED OF VALOR.

It was the day following Miss Allyn's departure to her distant home, and Marion Marlowe was once more making the rounds of the city.

As she stood before the door of a handsome brown-stone residence her brain was teeming with some hitherto almost unknown sensations.

Why was it that some should have so much and others so little? Why should she be so utterly destitute of even the necessities of life, while others were basking idly in the sunshine of luxury? The memory of that hateful mortgage had not left her day or night, yet as the weeks passed by they left her worse off than ever. She could now hardly afford to buy food for her sister and herself.

Since Miss Allyn's departure Dollie had worried herself sick and was now lying at home, ill with an obstinate slow fever. Good Mrs. Haley had helped them all she could, but her husband was poor and the demands upon them were enormous.

Marion groaned to think of being obliged to call upon her for anything.

As the door of the handsome house swung open Marion stepped wearily into the hall, where she was asked by a haughty butler to state her errand to his mistress.

"She advertised for a governess," said Marion, plaintively, "and I have an excellent education, I feel sure that I could suit her."

"Know French and German?" asked the man in a hard voice. "Can you teach the Delsarte method and play the piano?"

Marion stared at him for a second.

"The advertisement reads that Mrs. Van Siegen will pay only \$20 per month," she said faintly. "Is it possible she expects any such accomplishments for that money?"

"Certainly," said the butler with a pompous wave of his hand. "She not only expects it, but she'll doubtless get it. There's hundreds that will jump at the position which she offers."

"Poor things. Well, they are welcome to it," said Marion, with a sigh. "There must be people worse off than I am in the city."

She went out of the house with dull despair in her heart. This bit of information had set her thinking.

If women with such accomplishments were willing and glad to work for such money, it was plainly to be seen that there was little hope for her, with only a thorough New England school education.

"What shall I do?" she whispered as she turned toward home. "I haven't a dollar in the world, and poor Dollie is ill and suffering."

It was almost dark, still Marion walked along slowly. She had been so far that day that she felt lame and weary.

As she reached Union Square she started through the park, hoping that a glimpse of the grass and trees would rest her a little.

It was the middle of September, and the fountain, was still playing. There were people on all the benches and the walks were swarming with children.

Suddenly Marion saw a sight that made her blood boil with anger. She stood still staring for a moment, hardly able to believe it.

Some big boys had found a poor little yellow dog, and were amusing themselves by throwing it into the basin of the fountain and then letting it swim out, only to compel it to repeat the operation.

The dog was trembling with fear and looked utterly wretched, and Marion noticed that it was lame and limping.

In an instant she was in the very midst of the group of urchins, her fair face ablaze with indignation.

"Shame on you, boys, for tormenting the poor dog," she said, sternly. "Can't you see that it is lame, and sick, and frightened? How would you like to be thrown into the fountain yourselves? Do let the poor thing go and don't be so cruel."

"Aw, come off your perch," said one of the biggest boys, saucily, as he made a grab for the dog, just as it clambered up over the basin.

"Don't you dare do that again," cried Marion, who was now furious.

The boy grinned in her face as he caught the dog and threw it with all his might into the very centre of the fountain.

What followed was a surprise to every occupant of the benches, and as for the boys, their eyes almost popped out of their heads in wonder.

As quick as a flash Marion caught the big boy by the collar. Her grip was like iron, for she was in deadly earnest.

The next second she had lifted him completely off his feet, and with a terrific effort, flung him head first into the water.

Then catching up the poor little dog, all dripping, in her arms, she started for the street, as if nothing had happened.

A roar of delight went up from every spectator of the scene, and as for the boys, they jeered and laughed at their companion, shouting their approval of Marion's skill in the regular street gamin manner.

"That was well done, miss," said a big policeman, who had overtaken Marion as she was leaving the park. "I was up at the other end, or I'd have put a stop to their capers, but you did just right." He was shaking with laughter.

"What can I do with the dog, so they won't get it again?" asked Marion, who was still scarlet with indignation.

The officer turned around and beckoned to a good-natured but seedily dressed man.

"Here, Bill, take this dog over to the society's rooms," he said shortly, "and there's a quarter to pay you for your trouble."

Marion thanked them both and hurried away. Her heart was lighter for having done even a poor street dog a kindly service.

Just as she reached her home a gentleman rushed up to her. It was young Ralph Moore, looking worried and anxious.

"You are in awfully hard luck, aren't you, Miss Marlowe?" he said, rapidly, "and poor Dollie is sick. Oh, you don't know how I pity you."

"I don't know what I'll do," said Marion, sadly. "I am on our last dollar, and the rent is due to-morrow."

Mr. Moore stood in silence for just a min-

ute, then he turned to Marion again, his face flushing with emotion.

"I will be back in an hour or two, at the most, Miss Marlowe," he said, hastily. "Something has got to be done. I can't see poor Dollie suffer."

"Oh, what do you mean?" began Marion.

Mr. Moore cut her short with an impulsive explanation.

"I mean that I must help Dollie in some way or other, for I love her, Miss Marlowe, please tell her that I love her."

CHAPTER XI.

EMILE VORSE IS CAUGHT AT LAST.

In less than two hours Ralph Moore came back and astonished Marion by handing her one hundred dollars.

He was as pale as a corpse, but was unusually calm. There was not a tremor in his voice when he urged her to accept it.

"Never mind where I got it," he said, with a slight smile, "only promise me, Miss Marlowe, that you will say nothing about it. You see, my aunt and uncle might think I came by it dishonestly."

"Oh, I am sure they would not," said Marion, a bit startled. "I am sure they would be the last to accuse you of dishonesty."

"Well, I don't know," said Mr. Moore with another strange smile: "I've been a bit wild, and 'once give a dog a bad name'—you know the rest, Miss Marlowe."

"I would trust you anywhere," said Marion, firmly. "Your heart is too good, you could never do wrong. I am certain."

"If I did it would be with a good motive," said the young man again, "but I must go now, Miss Marlowe, and I would so like to see poor Dollie."

"You shall see her," said Marion, "for she is sitting up to-night. I think she has been better since she got your message."

She smiled at him slyly, and the young man blushed like a girl. When he entered the room, and had greeted Dollie, Marion discreetly retired for a few minutes.

"Dollie, dear Dollie, can you love me?" whispered Mr. Moore softly, as he went straight to the young girl who was bundled in wraps on the sofa.

"I do love you," murmured the girl with a rosy blush. "I think I loved you when I first saw you, and oh, I am so perfectly happy."

Mr. Moore put his arms around her and kissed her lips softly.

"And you will stick to me, Dollie?" he urged, very tenderly. "You won't go back on me, even though I am a little frisky?"

"I'd hate to have you any other way," ad-

mitted Dollie, frankly. "Yes, I will stand by you, Ralph, no matter what happens."

"It is awful to be poor when you are in love and want to get married," said the young man, sadly, after they had both said over and over that they should always love each other. "Oh, I do so hate this waiting until one can afford to marry, but I know it is sensible, don't you think so, dearest?"

"Yes, indeed," said Dollie, who was a very practical little woman. "We must wait patiently, Ralph, until we are both better off, and then, you know, I am very young—really I am not old enough to marry."

She blushed a fiery red as she said the words, for there was a secret in her soul that was weighing very heavily.

Should she tell him that awful experience through which she had passed? She knew it would be honorable, but she could not do it, at least just then.

Marion returned at that moment, so the love scene ended. In a few moments Mr. Moore was obliged to leave them.

"When shall I see you again, Ralph?" asked Dollie, pouting a little. "Here you are, going away without saying a word about returning."

The young man was standing with his hat in his hand, and for a second he seemed a little disconcerted.

Recovering himself, he said, with a tender glance:

"I shall come to-morrow, if possible, Dollie. If I don't it will be business of importance that detains me."

"Good-night, then," she murmured, and her lover bent over her once more. He kissed her fondly in spite of Marion's presence.

"I can never thank you enough for your kindness," said Marion, following him to the door, "but some day I hope I shall be able to do you as great a favor."

"You have done it already," said Ralph Moore, earnestly. "You have sanctioned Dollie's promise to marry me some day, and I can't begin to tell you how I thank you."

After he had gone Marion told Dollie the good news. For another month they could live in comparative comfort.

"I wonder where he got it," was Dollie's natural comment.

Marion sighed a little as she answered absently:

"It is one more debt of gratitude that I owe. When, oh, when, will I ever be able to repay them?"

The first thing the next morning Marion secured a doctor for Dollie. His bill was exorbitant, but she paid it ungrudgingly.

Her next move was to rent another type-

writing machine, for she was hopeful that by this means Dollie might be able to earn her living.

"Of course it is a risk," she argued to herself, "but it will amuse her when she is better, and she may be able to secure a position in an office when she has become proficient."

As the days passed by the hundred dollars seemed to melt away, and Marion redoubled her efforts to secure employment.

Mr. Moore came in every evening and tried to cheer them up, but the girls could see that he was often dispirited, although his manner was always courteous and affectionate. It was growing colder now and both girls needed new clothing, so this demand upon their capital diminished it still farther.

"If I was only well enough to look for work, too," Dollie would say every day, but, in spite of Marion's care she was still weak and ailing.

One night, when the winds were biting and the sky was laden with chilly mist, Marion was hurrying home from another day of fruitless searching.

A carriage passed her with its lanterns glowing brightly, and, as Marion gave a sharp glance into the vehicle, she saw her aunt and uncle leaning back in the cushions.

"Oh, this is horrible! horrible!" she whispered to herself. "They are fairly rolling in wealth, while their own nieces are starving."

She turned into a side street and hurried along. Right in the middle of a dark block two men confronted her.

"Ha! So I have met you again, my beauty," said a hateful voice which Marion recognized instantly. It was the man who had accosted her once before in a similar manner.

"You're just the girl we were hoping to meet. Come on, little sweetheart, and we'll treat you royally."

There was not a person to be seen in the block, and the long rows of houses looked dark and gloomy.

Marion gave a quick glance around and then uttered a shrill cry as she felt the man's hand fall familiarly on her shoulder.

"Don't you dare to touch me, you scoundrel!" she almost screamed. "Oh, why is it that such a ruffian is not in prison?"

"I'll tell you why, if you're dead anxious to know," said the other man, chuckling. "Our friend here is too slippery, the police can't catch him."

"Well, if he touches me again I'll scream so that every officer in New York will hear me," said Marion, boldly, then she suddenly stopped short and stared at the fellow.

"Oh, I guess you won't do so very much

screaming, my beauty," was the sneering answer.

Marion had walked on slowly with the two men close beside her, and just as they reached a particularly gloomy-looking house the last speaker clapped his hand suddenly over her mouth, while he threw the other arm in a strong grip around her shoulders.

"Quick! Drag her into the areaway," ordered the other fellow in a low voice. "I have a key to the basement, and the house is empty."

As Marion heard the words she realized in an instant what the villain meant. She was at their mercy. The thought made her desperate.

In the same instant it flashed across her mind who the half-drunken fellow was. It was Emile Vorse. She knew him in spite of his disguise—for was he not the man of all men whom she had cause to remember?

With one fearful effort she wrenched his hand from her face and gave a cry for help that fairly woke the echoes.

In a second both men were flying down the street and people came hurrying to her aid from every direction.

As a burly policeman rushed up to her, Marion pointed in the direction of the fleeing men.

"They tried to assault me—do catch them, officer," she cried. "One is Emile Vorse, who is wanted at headquarters!"

Like a flash the officer was after his quarry, giving three short raps on the sidewalk with his night-stick as he ran, to summon assistance.

Marion explained the situation to a small crowd of men and boys who had gathered, and they promptly started off to help the policeman.

As quickly as possible Marion hurried home and retired. The first thing in the morning she went out and bought a paper.

"They caught him! They caught Emile Vorse!" she cried out, happily, "but, oh, Dollie, just listen to this. They say he has been calling himself by the name of Max, and that he has been deceiving young girls to ruin through an agency of some sort."

"The very man that insulted me in his office," cried Dollie, with a gasp. "His name was Mr. Max, oh, I am so glad they have caught him."

"Miss Ray will be delighted," was Marion's answer, "for she has never felt quite safe, knowing that the fellow was at liberty."

"Well, it's a very true saying that 'it is a long lane that has no turning.'"

"I hope our lane will turn pretty soon," said Dollie, sighing.

Just then Marion's glance fell on another item in the paper.

"That boy that was run over by the cable car was not identified," she said, sadly. "He had no friends, apparently, for he has been buried by the city."

"He was just Bert's age," said Dollie, sorrowfully.

Marion dropped the paper and stared at her sister.

"Oh, Dollie, I have a scheme," she cried, excitedly. "Quick! Open your typewriter and be ready to take a dictation. I'm going to play a trick on Matt Jenkins that will give Bert Jackson his freedom."

CHAPTER XII.

A TERRIBLE SITUATION.

While Dollie was getting her machine in shape her sister composed the following letter.

"MR. MATTHEW JENKINS; Poor Farm, Hickorytown, Conn.

"Dear Sir—A boy about sixteen was recently run over by a cable car in this city and killed. As he was unidentified within the regular time allowed by the city, he has been buried in Potter's Field, the same as any other pauper. I have seen the garments left by the deceased and recognized them as belonging to one of your truant boys, one Bert Jackson, who was in my employ a few days after his arrival in this city. Knowing that the boy was your charge, I write this letter. It should relieve you of all anxiety regarding him in future."

She signed the letter "John Johnson," but appended no address. They could think whatever they pleased about the omission, it would make no difference in Matt Jenkins' actions in the matter.

"He'll be tickled to death," said Dollie, grimly. "He'll just be glad he is dead and that's the last he'll ever think of him."

"And that is exactly what I want," said Marion, laughing, "for as soon as they think he is dead, they'll stop looking for him."

"You are the cleverest girl in the world," said Dollie, as she addressed the envelope.

She had become quite proficient now on her typewriter.

"I wish I was clever enough to get work," was her sister's answer as she inserted some newspaper clippings about the dead boy in the envelope, "but I shall very soon, for I am getting desperate."

As the girls were planning what to do next Mrs. Haley came in. She was as pleasant as usual, but Marion could see that something was troubling her. After kissing the girls tenderly, she sat down by Dollie, who was not quite well yet, but slowly convalescing.

Marion had felt a little embarrassed in Mrs. Haley's company of late, for she knew that her friend must wonder where she got her money to go on paying her rent and to employ a physician for Dollie.

But her promise to Ralph had been sacredly kept, and Mrs. Haley was far too courteous to ask any questions.

To-day even Dollie felt a little ill at ease, for Mrs. Haley, in spite of her kindness, did not look exactly natural.

"What is troubling you, Mrs. Haley?" asked Marion, at last. "You look so worried and pale. Has anything happened?"

Mrs. Haley tried to smile, but the effort was pitiful.

"There has, indeed," she said sadly, "and I feel that I must tell it, although I dread to shock Dollie, when she has so little strength, the poor dear."

"Tell it at once, Mrs. Haley. I can hear it," cried Dollie, quickly. "Has anything happened to Ralph? Do hurry and tell us."

Mrs. Haley took the young girl's hand and patted it as she spoke.

"It may not be so serious, after all," she said, more brightly, "but you know my nephew is living with me at present and, well, about three weeks ago an old family heirloom, a diamond, was stolen from the flat, and as Ralph and my husband were the only ones who knew exactly where I kept the stone, it was perhaps not unnatural that I should suspect him. Of course I put the question to him plainly, but for some reason or other he refuses to answer it. Since that time I have been at a loss to know what to do. We are trying to trace the jewel, but so far we have not been able to find it."

For a moment after she stopped talking there was not a sound in the room except the ticking of the clock, which was painfully in evidence.

The face of Ralph Moore's betrothed was like the driven snow when she turned toward her sister, but one look at Marion gave her the strength to recover.

Marion sat like a statue, her face as pale as death, but with a smile wreathing her lips that spoke of heroic resolution.

"He will prove himself innocent, I am sure of it," she said firmly. "It is dreadful for us all, but Ralph is sure to be vindicated. Please believe me, Mrs. Haley, I have absolute faith in him."

"Yes, indeed," murmured Dollie, in a fainter voice. She had not the strength to be as firm and determined as her sister.

"I thought you would feel that way," said Mrs. Haley, sadly. "God grant that you may be right, but as he has asked Dollie to marry him, I felt that she ought to know it."

"Certainly," said Marion, still in her calm, clear voice. "And I think she will cling to him even more closely in his trouble, for I am sure Ralph would never do a dishonest deed. There must be a mistake. Oh, I am almost sure of it."

"I have tried hard to think so, for he is my sister's child," said Mrs. Haley, sadly. "Oh, the suspicion is dreadful. I wish I could evercome it."

As soon as their visitor was gone, poor little Dollie burst out crying.

"Oh, Marion, he took it," she whispered, faintly. "He stole it for us when I was sick and we had no money."

"It is dreadful," said Marion, in a broken voice. "Oh, why couldn't he see that it was better for us to starve. Poor Ralph, I forgive him, but, oh, I wish he hadn't done it. And to think we have promised to say nothing about it."

Dollie grew so sick after this that Marion was terribly alarmed. A chill came on, followed by a raging fever.

Marion looked in her purse. There was just three dollars left. Without the slightest hesitation she ran for a doctor.

That night when Dollie was more quiet she went out for a short walk. She felt that she must be alone where she could think over the situation.

That hundred dollars must be earned and returned to Ralph. She clenched her hands together as she came to this decision. As she turned a corner she saw a group of people just before her all standing around a man who appeared to be a street preacher.

As Marion came nearer she recognized Mr. Haley's voice. He was talking earnestly and sensibly in his eloquent manner.

At the close of his exhortation he started a hymn. It was an old familiar air that Marion had known all her life, and in an instant it took her back to her home in the country. For just one brief minute the old farm rose up before her. Then came a vision of Silas Johnson turning the old people out and then she thought suddenly of Dollie and her own utter helplessness.

A wave of emotion swept through every fibre of her body.

She must give vent to her sorrow or go mad with grief.

Before she knew it her lips were opened and she joined heart and soul in the singing.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARION'S FIRST ENGAGEMENT AS A SINGER.

At the very moment in which Marion opened her lips to sing two men turned the corner of the street, walking directly toward the preacher.

One was a man of thirty, of Hebrew origin, whose affluent circumstances were plainly apparent.

The other was a German, well dressed, but vulgar in appearance, and wearing a diamond stud that resembled the headlight of an engine.

"I tell you, we'd beat them hands down if it wasn't for Carlotta," the German was saying. "We open the same night, and we've got to beat them! And we can do it if we can get one more first-class singer."

"If I could only have got Carlotta to sing my song," said his companion, sighing. "it would have been the hit of the evening, but it was just my luck not to get her."

"She's their winning card," began the German again, but with a sudden exclamation his companion interrupted him.

"Great Jerusalem, Otto, just hear that voice! Who the mischief is she? Quick! She's down here with that preacher!"

"A regular Patti!" cried the German, hurrying.

"Bosh! Patti isn't in it with that girl!" was the answer. "Why, her voice is like a lark—it's as fresh as a wild flower! And that's about what she is," he added as he caught sight of the singer.

Both men stood spellbound as Marion finished the hymn. They had removed their hats almost involuntarily as they listened.

As Marion's last note died away she looked around in embarrassment. The spell of exaltation had left her—she was almost frightened.

"Thank you," said Mr. Haley in his cordial way. "That was a treat, indeed, and the hymn is a grand one."

"I couldn't help singing," said Marion, simply. "It is one of our old hymns that we sing up in the country."

The crowd stared at her curiously as she turned away, and would probably have applauded had not the preacher objected.

"No! No! Not now! Not at this time!" he said, smiling. "The child is a friend of mine; she only did it to help me."

"She'll make more converts than you will, Mr. Haley!" called a jovial voice in the crowd.

The preacher laughed good-naturedly as he answered.

"I hope she will, I am sure, Mr. Smythe. It would be a pity if that voice could not cheer the soul of some poor sinner."

Marion was hurrying away, when two men stepped up to her.

"I beg your pardon, miss," said Marcus Rosen, the song writer, politely. "I have just been listening to your beautiful singing. You

have a magnificent voice. Pray tell me who trained it."

Marion looked up at him sharply and saw the eagerness in his face.

"It has never been trained, sir, by any one," she said, simply. "I sing as I feel—I know nothing of method."

"Well, you are one in a thousand," said the man again. "But tell me, are you engaged to sing anywhere at present? Would you accept an offer if my friend here should make you one?"

Marion stared at the speaker in blank amazement. She could hardly believe that such good fortune could come to her.

"I will, indeed," she said, very timidly; "but as I told you at first, I know nothing about singing."

The German, whose name was Otto Vondergrift, took a card from his pocket and handed it to her.

"Call on me to-morrow morning at ten o'clock," he said. "I have a little song that I want you to learn, and then if you will sing it at my opening concert I will give you one hundred dollars."

Marion tried to thank him, but burst out crying.

"I will be there without fail," she finally managed to stammer.

"You could have got her for a tenspot, Otto," said the younger man as they walked along. "Can't you see, she's from the country and mighty hard up? You must be getting a little reckless with your ducats."

"Perhaps so," said Vondergrift, smiling, "but maybe you will find that I am wiser than you. That girl's voice is phenomenal. She will make a fortune for me! And she's just green enough, my boy, to think that I'm an angel."

"You mean that she'll appreciate your handsome offer so highly that the manager of the 'Olio' will not be able to buy her over! Well, if she does she'll be the first singer to do it," was the answer, "and after she sings for you one night she'll have plenty of offers."

"That's exactly why I made my price so high," said Vondergrift again; "I have anticipated these offers and bagged my prima donna!"

"You may be right," said the other, slowly. "and, anyway, it's your money, not mine. She certainly can sing, and that is what we are after. Why, Carlotta is a mere croaker compared with our rustic."

Marion sped home like the wind to carry the good news to Dollie, and for a time the two girls were almost radiantly happy.

In the first mail the next morning Marion received a letter. It was from her sister Samantha, the first she had had from her.

"Father must be relenting," she said, with a bitter smile, "or else Samantha has at last found courage to defy his orders."

She glanced over the letter and then almost screamed in surprise.

"Oh, Dollie! Here is news, indeed! I know now why Silas wanted to marry you so badly. He's been buying chickens and pigs, and is going to fatten them for market, and of course he is desperately in need of a household drudge, and at last he has married poor, homely, Sallie Green! I guess he despaired of ever getting a prettier woman!"

"Poor Sallie!" cried Dollie, her eyes filling with tears. "I don't envy her a lifetime in Silas Johnson's kitchen!"

"And to think that he tried to make you feel that he was doing you a favor by asking you to marry him," sneered Marion, "when all he wanted was a drudge for his kitchen!"

"I hope he will be good to her," said Dollie, very earnestly.

"I wonder what father will do about that mortgage now," was Marion's only answer. "He can't trade you off to settle it now, so it begins to look as if he'd have to raise the money."

"Oh, there's no hope for him now," said Dollie, sighing. "They'll be turned out surely, and have to live with Samantha."

"But Samantha's husband won't have them," was Marion's prompt answer, "which means that they'll be forced to go to the Poor Farm."

The two girls stared at each other with expressions of horror. It was a terrible thought—they could hardly endure it.

Bert Jackson came in and found them both weeping bitterly. He had brought Marion the ten dollars which she loaned him on the night of his escape from the Poor Farm, and the money looked like a fortune to the poor girls in their destitute condition.

When Marion told him of the letter which she had written to Matt Jenkins poor Bert was so delighted that he nearly went into hysterics.

"I never dreamed that it would be such fun to be dead," he said, gayly, "but now I can breathe easy. Matt won't be trying to chase a deader. And I've got a job, too," he said, delightedly. "Eight dollars a week as clerk in a grocery store!"

"We'll come and buy our potatoes and other things of you," laughed Dollie; "that is, if Marion gets a steady place to sing for those people, and as soon as I get real well I'll keep house for both of you."

"That would be glorious," said Bert, "but I'm afraid it won't work. There's a young man whom I know who might object, Miss Dollie."

Dollie blushed as she was reminded so broadly of her sweetheart, and Marion explained to Bert the whole situation.

"He's a noble fellow! I don't much care what he did!" cried Bert in admiration; "I'd steal, too, if it was to keep you girls from starving, and I think a man is a cad who says he wouldn't!"

"Oh, Bert! That isn't right!" said Marion, firmly. "Of course, we forgive him, but, oh, he shouldn't have done it! It is awful to steal from any motive! I shall give him every penny of my hundred dollars."

Dollie drew a long breath, and the tears sprang to her eyes.

"We have not seen him since—since we became suspicious," she said, very hesitatingly. "Poor fellow! He must be wretched, and yet he knows that we forgive him!"

CHAPTER XIV.

MARION SINGS IN A CONCERT HALL.

Marion was on hand promptly at ten o'clock, and as Otto Vondergrift saw the beautiful face and figure in the broad light of day he chuckled a little over his cleverness in offering her so much money.

"She'll stick to me now, whereas she might have bolted after the first night if I had offered her less," he repeated to his friend, the song writer, while Marion waited.

"She is certainly very beautiful," said Marcus Rosen, as he peered at Marion through the half-open door of a private office.

"You mark my words, Rosen," said Vondergrift again, "the manager of our rival hall across the way will try to get her away from me just the minute he hears her, but he's not likely to offer her any more than she's getting. Oh, I know the world and the people in it far better than you do, my friend! I'm a business man, while you are an artist."

"I guess you are right," was the drawling answer, "but I flatter myself that I know you pretty well, my dear Otto, and I'm willing to bet that outside of her making money for you, you've got designs on the little rustic."

"Well, if I have, then I am all right about the hundred," was the laughing answer, "for that girl is too shy to be tempted by a bottle of wine and a supper."

"Oh, well, it's none of my business, any way," said the artist again; "but come, I'm dying to hear her sing. Let's take her right into the hall—it's perfectly empty."

When Marcus Rosen began playing the prelude to the song which Marion was expected to sing, the young girl's timidity disappeared like magic.

The magnificent toned piano absorbed her

whole soul, and she was soon almost unconscious of time or surroundings.

After playing the song over two or three times, the young man motioned for her to sing it.

She did so, and with such an intelligence of expression and such a ready ear that both the manager and the composer were highly delighted.

Marion rehearsed the piece several times in the next four days, first with the piano accompaniment and then with a full orchestra.

The afternoon before the concert she rehearsed for the last time, and as she hurried home to Dollie, she was flushed with excitement.

"I don't quite understand about the concert," she said, anxiously. "It is to be in the big hall that Mr. Vondergrift owns, and there's another hall called 'The Olio' right across the street that is also to be opened with a concert this evening. There are a dozen or more people to sing, or do something at Mr. Vondergrift's concert, for, of course, he wishes his to be the most attractive."

"What kind of people are they?" asked Dollie, who was sitting at her typewriter. She was so much better now that she could practice daily.

"That is what I can't understand," said Marion slowly. "They can all sing fairly well, and some of them are quite pretty, but some way they seem to me to be very rude—I might almost say, vulgar."

"What a pity you should have to mix with them," said Dollie.

"Oh, I don't!" was Marion's quick answer. "Mr. Vondergrift has managed that! Why, he lets me wait my turn in a little room all by myself, and to-day he brought me a delicious little luncheon!"

"How lovely of him!" said Dollie, going on with her work.

Not once did it seem to either of these simple girls that Mr. Vondergrift's attentions meant anything more than kindness.

"See here, Dollie!" cried Marion, with a jolly laugh, "they've actually advertised that I am to sing to-night, only they've given me a queer Italian name. I suppose they are trying to make out that I am some great singer."

Dollie looked at the programme that Marion held out to her.

"Signorita Ila de Pailoa," she read, in an amused voice. "What a terrible name! And what a lot of deceit! Why in the world couldn't he have called you just plain Marion Marlowe?"

"Oh, that wouldn't do at all! He explained it to me," said Marion, a little dubiously. "The public insist upon having foreigners, so

he is obliged to fool them. And, besides, Dollie, my name would not suit for another reason—I'm only a country girl, who has had her name in all the papers."

"You have, indeed, but it was always as a heroine!" said Dollie, proudly. "First they told all about your rescuing me, and then the way they spoke of you at the fire was simply delightful!"

"Well, I've had quite enough of it," said Marion, decidedly. "I shall be glad to be able to stay in the background in future."

"I wish I could be there to hear you sing," said Dollie, plaintively, "but I don't feel very strong yet, and, besides, Mrs. Haley is coming this evening, you know, and I shall surprise her when I tell her that you are singing in a concert."

"I hope I have done right in keeping it from her," said Marion, slowly. "Some way, I was afraid she would not approve of my singing in public."

"If she only knew your motive!" sighed Dollie, plaintively.

"She must never know," was Marion's decided answer.

"See here, Dollie, what I am to wear," said Marion later, as she was opening a bundle. "They have loaned me a dress, because mine is not suitable, and I had to bring it home to see if it needed to be altered."

She took out a pretty silk dress that just suited her complexion, but both girls were horrified to find that it was very low in the neck, and had no sleeves whatever.

"I don't mind about the sleeves so much," said Marion, blushing, "but I'll never wear a low neck like that, never!"

"Here's a big piece of lace," said Dollie, pulling it out of the package. "I expect it is intended for a veil or a mantle, but you can just drape it around your neck and shoulders, and you'll be as pretty as a picture."

Marion dressed in the little room that Mr. Vondergrift had set aside for her, and almost before she was ready her employer came to find her.

"What's that stuff around your neck?" was his first words of greeting.

Marion blushed to the roots of her hair as she answered:

"The neck was too low, Mr. Vondergrift," she said, simply. "It was fortunate I had the lace, so that I was able to fix it."

"You are a goose," said the man, with a frown of displeasure, and just at that moment one of the other singers came to look for him.

Marion took one look at her and almost gasped, for the woman's dress was cut so low in the neck and so short in the skirt that to Marion's mind she might almost as well have been naked. There was no mistaking her ex-

pression of horror, and Mr. Vondergrift, like a wise man, decided to say no more about her appearance.

"She'll come to it after a little," he said to Marcus Rosen, when he left her. "If I had insisted to-night, she would have 'kicked over the traces,' and, anyway, it will be a novelty. I hope it catches."

When Marion's turn came, she was fairly trembling. Never before in her life had she felt so embarrassed. Only the thought of Dollie and Ralph Moore gave her courage to go on. It was imperative that she should earn that one hundred dollars.

There was a blaze of light as Marion reached the stage, then a blare from the orchestra that sounded strangely confusing.

She had never seen the big hall lighted before, and the row of lights at the front of the stage dazzled her eyes for a minute so that she could hardly open them.

Almost as if in a dream she heard Mr. Vondergrift's voice whispering to her to hurry, and she advanced toward the centre of the stage and tried to collect her scattered senses.

As the orchestra changed to the opening bars of the prelude to her song, Marion became more composed and was able to look about a little.

What kind of a place was she in? Her eyes were wide open now as she asked herself the question.

Men and women, scores of them, were seated all over the hall, and before them were small tables loaded with bottles and glasses, while men with white aprons moved swiftly between them, carrying trays which contained more glasses and bottles.

A whiff of villainous tobacco smoke floated to her nostrils, and just then the opening chord of her song was struck. Marion closed her eyes and commenced her song.

There was hardly a sound in the house while the young girl sang, and the silence helped her to concentrate her thoughts on the inspiration of her song, which was her sister Dollie.

It was a simple ballad, filled with pathos and love, and Marion's exquisite voice thrilled even the most callous of her hearers.

As the last note died away, there was silence for a moment, then the audience rose to its feet and fairly yelled its "Bravos!"

"You must go back, they are encoring you," cried Mr. Vondergrift, meeting her in the wings.

"Oh, I can't! I can't!" said Marion, almost crying.

"Can you sing 'Comin' Thro' the Rye?'" asked Mr. Vondergrift, with a sudden inspiration.

"Why, certainly," said Marion, a little surprised that he should ask her.

"Then go back and sing it!" said the man peremptorily.

Marion went back to the footlights and was greeted with a perfect storm of applause.

A signal from somewhere told the orchestra to be silent.

In another second Marion started the well-known ditty. The cheers that followed fairly shook the building.

CHAPTER XV.

MARION SEES MR. MOORE.

"Carlotta" and "The Olio" were eclipsed entirely, and Otto Vondergrift took occasion to brag a little the next morning.

"That hundred wasn't a bad investment, after all," he said to his friend Rosen. "Why, there wasn't a dozen people left in 'The Olio' after Ila began singing!"

"Here she comes!" said the song writer, as Marion entered. "I'll leave you to make love to your little rustic prima donna!"

"Here are your hundred dollars, miss," said Vondergrift, promptly, "and I'll give you the same price if you will sing again this evening, and to-morrow I'll make a contract to hire you for the season."

Marion put the money in her pocket, and then faced him tremblingly.

"I had no idea, sir, that I was to sing in a drinking place," she said, slowly; "believe me, your money would not have tempted me if I had known it. I am a temperance woman—I don't believe in drinking liquor."

Otto Vondergrift was so surprised that he could hardly speak for a moment.

"What, do you mean that you refuse my offer of one hundred dollars for an evening? Why, girl, are you mad, or are you dreaming?"

"I must refuse it, sir!" said Marion, sternly. "I do not approve of your concert hall, and I should feel disgraced were I to again appear in it!"

"Well, I'll be blowed!" was the German's only answer.

"I am very much obliged to you for the money," said Marion, coolly, as she turned toward the door, after bidding him "good-morning."

In a second a wave of disappointment and chagrin thrilled the manager's frame; his face grew livid with rage as he took a step toward her.

"So they have bought you off at 'The Olio,' have they?" he sneered. "You've gone back on your benefactor, you little country innocent!"

"I have done nothing of the sort," said

Marion, with spirit. "I shall never sing in a concert hall again. I think it is dreadful! It is degrading!"

She swept out of the door and into the street, leaving the astounded manager cursing like a madman.

As quickly as Marion was safely out, she started for the office where her sister's lover worked. There was joy at her heart that she was at last able to repay him.

"The end almost justifies the means," she whispered to herself, "but I could never sing there again, never, never!"

Marion called Ralph outside into the little hallway. It was the first time they had met since Mrs. Haley told her story.

As quick as she could, Marion tucked the one hundred dollars into his hand. The young man drew back, alternately flushing and paling, but the brave girl put her hands behind her.

"No, you must keep it, Ralph," she said, firmly. "It is my duty to help clear up the cloud that hangs over you."

"But how can you do that?" asked the young man, candidly. "I stole the diamond and pawned it, and what is more, I don't regret it!"

Marion's heart almost stopped beating for an instant, then she grasped his hand in both her own.

"Let us go to your aunt together and I will explain," she said, quickly. "We can stop for the diamond on the way, and, oh, Ralph, don't you see the matter must be settled?"

"Very well, Marion," was Ralph's answer, in a weary voice. "I'm ready to tell her, and I'll be glad when it's over."

"Then you will go with me, right away?" asked the young girl, quickly.

Ralph Moore stopped suddenly and raised his head a trifle.

"No, Marion!" he said, distinctly. "I'm not such a coward! I will take your money and restore my aunt her diamond, but I will tell her the truth myself and abide by her decision!"

He looked so noble and manly that Marion's heart thrilled as she looked at him.

"Oh, Ralph!" she cried, brokenly, "don't ever do such a thing again! Believe me, it is better to starve than to be dishonest!"

A faint smile passed over the young man's handsome features.

"I am free to confess that I would starve before I would steal for myself," he said, slowly, "but do you think I would hesitate when Dollie was starving?"

Marion turned away. She had no words with which to answer him. She knew that he was wrong, yet she could not find it in her heart to censure him.

"You will come and see her to-night, will you not?" she said, finally. "Poor child, she has been worrying terribly about you!"

"And it has nearly killed me to stay away," answered the young man, honestly, "but I could not face her; I was too utterly miserable, and yet, as I said just now, I would do the same thing over again under the same circumstances."

"If you do, you will lose our friendship forever," said Marion, solemnly. "Don't do wrong again, Ralph, from no matter what motive."

As Marion hurried up Broadway, she felt almost happy, for the consciousness of doing right was always her greatest pleasure.

She felt sure that Mrs. Haley would forgive him freely; then she breathed a sigh as she again faced the problem of the future.

There was no money left, and the rent was due to-morrow, while the date of that terrible mortgage was growing rapidly nearer.

As Marion walked along, she hardly raised her eyes from the pavement, but suddenly she became aware that something unusual was happening.

A half a block before her she saw a small danger sign standing in the middle of the pavement, and groups of idle loungers stood on the various corners, all gazing up at a very high building.

Marion looked up also, and then stared a little. They were raising an enormous safe to the seventh story window. It was the first time she had seen it done, and she looked on with interest.

The young girl had walked as near to the danger sign as she dared, when she suddenly saw a sight that thrilled her with horror.

A lady, with a little girl, came out of an adjoining building, and the child, seeing something on the sidewalk that attracted its attention, darted like a flash directly under the suspended safe, which weighed six tons at the least calculation.

The lady screamed, but seemed powerless to move, while a dozen voices shouted to the child from all directions. Marion's nerves were so tense that she seemed unconscious for an instant, then an ominous creaking of the ropes brought her to her senses, and as the enormous cable parted, she darted forward like an arrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CROWNING ACT OF HEROISM.

One second more and her act would have been fatal.

Marion caught the child and sprang back like a flash. The next instant, with a crash that echoed block after block, the mammoth box of iron struck the walk where the child

had stood and actually telescoped its way straight through the pavement into the cellar.

There was not a sound for the space of a second, then the frightened bystanders recovered their voices and a cheer went up that was swelled from every direction. A policeman was just in time to catch the child's mother as she fainted, and at that moment a handsome carriage drove up, with the coachman pale with apprehension.

"You had better go home with her, miss, for she has fainted," said the officer. "I'll have to send for an ambulance if there is no one to go with her."

"She has only fainted," said Marion, calmly, "but I'll go home with her with pleasure, if I can be of any assistance."

Some one had brought a glass of water, and the lady was rapidly reviving.

"Do come home with me, dear," she said, turning to Marion.

The officer assisted them into the carriage, and again the crowd swung their hats and cheered the brave girl to the echo. Two hours later Marion burst into the little furnished room where Dollie sat, waving a check for a thousand dollars in her hand, and with tears of joy glistening on her dark lashes.

"Oh, Dollie! Dollie!" she cried, hysterically, "I saved a rich woman's child from getting killed, and she has made me a present of a thousand dollars!"

Dollie stared at her in absolute amazement, and at that very moment in rushed Miss Allyn.

"Oh, you darling girl! You have been and made a heroine of yourself again!" she cried, happily. "And to think I had only been in town an hour when I saw you do that heroic deed and got another 'exclusive' in the evening paper!"

The girls were both hugging and kissing her, but she went on talking rapidly.

"Poor mother left me a little money, girls, enough to pay my bills, if I get out of work, but I'm back on my paper in the same old job, and I've got the promise of a position for Dollie."

"You thought of us the very first thing, of course," said Marion, laughing. "It wouldn't be you if you were not doing us a kindness."

"Oh, come off!" cried Miss Allyn, in her characteristic slang. "Why, Marion, you're a treasure! I'm constantly making money out of you! Why, I couldn't begin to tell how much I have made out of your exploits!"

There was a rap on the door and Bert Jackson came in.

"Hurrah! I've heard all about it!" he cried, delightedly. "It's all in the paper, and

they say you are a daisy! I do hope that woman rewarded you, Marion."

"She wrote me up," said Marion, as she introduced him to Miss Allyn, "and the rich woman gave me a thousand dollars."

Bert did a "two-step" around the room to show his appreciation.

"Now, what the mischief will you do with so much money, Marion?" he asked, jokingly.

"Pay off the mortgage on father's farm for the first thing," was the girl's prompt reply, "and then there'll be five hundred left for Miss Allyn and Dollie and me, and I guess we'll find a way to spend it."

"You must buy some city clothes," said Bert, with unusual gravity. "I'm just dying to see how you and Dollie will look in swell togs. You are too deucedly pretty to go around looking so dowdy!"

There was a general shout at Bert's honest words, but through it all Miss Allyn was gazing at Marion admiringly.

"Do you know what I think?" she asked, rather curtly. "Well, I'll tell you, Miss Marion Marlowe, and you can thank me or not. I think that paying off your father's mortgage is your crowning act of heroism!"

Just then a messenger boy knocked on the door and handed in a letter.

"It is from Ralph," said Dollie, blushing as she looked it over. "He has been forgiven freely by his aunt, and is coming over to see me this evening."

"And I have a letter from Mr. Ray," said Marion, drawing one from her pocket. "He says that they are all growing steadily 'fat and happy,' and that his sister Ada has a brand new lover, who isn't such a cad as the other fellow."

"Is that all he says?" asked Miss Allyn, slyly.

Marion's sweet face crimsoned to the roots of her hair.

"I'll not tell you," she said, laughing, "for I know your tricks. You'd trot right down town and put it in the paper."

And in this pleasant manner a long, dreary struggle ended. Marion Marlowe had proved herself a heroine in more ways than one, and now, with her friends about her, and a brighter outlook before her, the courageous girl was enjoying a little respite.

THE END.

No. 3 of MY QUEEN will be entitled "Marion Marlowe's True Heart; or, How a Daughter Forgave." If you are pleased with Marion and her adventures, the publishers trust you will continue to read her career from week to week.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY
GRACE SHIRLEY

NOTE.—This department will be made a special feature of this publication. It will be conducted by Miss Shirley, whose remarkable ability to answer all questions, no matter how delicate the import, will be much appreciated, we feel sure, by all our readers, who need not hesitate to write her on any subject. Miss Shirley will have their interests at heart and never refuse her assistance or sympathy.

The following letters are a few which we have received from time to time, addressed to the editors of our different publications, the answers to which will be found interesting.
STREET & SMITH.

I am a young man of eighteen, and perhaps you will think that I should go to a man for advice in my troubles, but I have read your letters to young women and am of the opinion that your advice would be better than that of any man I ever met. I have been paying attention to a young lady for six months and have tried to be a model lover. I only earn eight dollars a week, but I have taken her to picnics and bought ice cream and soda for her frequently, yet she does not seem to care more for me than for the other young men whom she meets. Do you think it wise for me to try any longer to win her affection?
ALFRED K."

We are very pleased to receive your letter and assure you that our sympathies are with all young men in their troubles. No—we would not advise you to waste any more time on the young lady in question as she does not seem to appreciate your efforts; but you must bear in mind that no amount of ice cream will buy affection. If the young lady does not love you for yourself alone, you cannot win her over even though you were to invest your whole eight dollars in sugary inducements. We would advise you to save the money you are now spending in this way in order to buy groceries for some other young lady who, we hope, will better appreciate your devotion in the future.

"You have been so helpful in your answers to others who have written you for advice that I know you will help me out with my trouble.

"We have been married two years, and I had my husband's attention until recently. Now he seems to find more pleasure in chatting with other women when we spend an evening out than he does in talking with me. I have no idea that he is unfaithful, but I want him all to myself. How can I make myself more interesting?

"MRS. ALICE M."

We would suggest that you let your affection for your husband work out its own salvation. You will surely have cause to congratulate yourself more if he prefers you after seeing other women than if he saw only you. It is no compliment to a woman to stick to her because she is the only woman in sight. If your husband talks with other women and yet gives you no cause to

doubt him you have the best possible proof that you are more attractive to him than any one else.

We think that you are probably over-jealous, and that your husband only fulfills the requirements of society in making himself agreeable to the women he meets. You should do exactly the same as he does—make the most of others' company when you meet them at any social function, and be more than happy when you and your husband are alone together and can exchange those mutual loving confidences that are so gratifying.

"I have read with interest your letters of advice to others and hope that you will be kind enough to advise me in my trouble. My husband earns fifteen dollars a week, and after our expenses are paid there are four dollars left, out of which I only receive one for spending money. As I work very hard to economize for him, do you not think that he should divide more evenly? I have asked him, and he says that one dollar a week pin money is enough for any woman.

"MRS. A. H. B."

We are very sorry indeed to hear that these troubles exist between you and your husband. The question of finances has broken up many a family. We can only advise you to reason with your husband and try to convince him that his own dignity requires that his wife should be possessed of sufficient funds to enable her to escape humiliation when in company with other women whose husbands are in similar financial circumstances.

"I have read your letters to other young women and take the liberty of asking you to kindly answer this: I became engaged to a young man about six months ago. He gave me a beautiful engagement ring of sapphires and diamonds. Now I want to break the engagement and do not want to give him back the ring. Would it be mean in me to keep it? I do not think he will ask for it."

It looks to us very much as though you cared for the young man's ring more than you did for him. Did you promise to marry him in order to get the bauble? A young girl who will let her

vanity carry her to such an extent is deserving of the severest censure; but we trust that in your case we are mistaken. Send him back the ring by all means! It was given you as the emblem of your devotion. If you do not love him, you have no right to wear it. Do not lower the standard of your sex by such a foolish action.

"I am a young lady of fourteen, and a young man I know is very fond of me. My mother tells me that I am too young to think of such things, and insists that I shall go to school for two years longer. Now, as she was married at fourteen, I do not think she ought to stop me from marrying for I feel very sure that I should be perfectly happy with Charley. Please tell me what you would advise.

LIZZIE C."

In the first place, Lizzie, we would suggest that you speak of yourself as a young girl, not as a "young lady." No girl can be a "lady" who ignores her mother's sensible advice. You certainly should go to school for several years longer. You are entirely too young to think of marrying. Your mother was probably a far wiser girl at your age than you are. Try to develop your character and learn as much as you can. When you are twenty years of age you will make a far better choice of a husband than you can possibly do now.

"I am spending the fall months in the Pennsylvania mountains. There are a lot of young men at the hotel here, and we have straw rides two or three times a week. Now, we girls always try to have a jolly time, and we do let the boys kiss and hug us when we are off on a ride. Last night a lady stopping at the same house as myself saw us and she read me a terrible lecture on what she called 'my loose conduct.' Do you think there is any real harm in a little innocent fun like that? She threatened to write to my parents and have me sent home.

JESSIE C. M."

It is true that young girls have been kissed and hugged since the world began, and it is doubtful if this form of amusement does the amount of harm that is popularly supposed, especially when the intent is innocent. The stolen kiss is far more dangerous to morality than that bestowed openly in the presence of one's companions. No doubt the lady you speak of meant her lecture for your good, but we trust that her language was not merited. You should learn to be judicious and avoid the appearance of evil. One thing is certain—the young lady who holds herself aloof from undue familiarity, and maintains a reasonable amount of maidenly reserve, stands a better chance of winning the permanent affections of some good man than does the one who is too free with her favors.

"One of the nicest fellows in the world has been paying attention to me for over a year. He has never said outright that he loves me, but I know he does from the way he acts. A short time ago I met another fellow that I liked pretty well, and went out with him once or twice. Now the first one has threatened to shoot himself if I go

out with the other any more. I don't want him to do anything rash, and yet I do enjoy an occasional evening out with my new acquaintance. How can I adjust my conduct so as to suit my old beau for whom I really care a great deal?"

"ADELINE."

We do not think your old friend will do what he threatens, as this line of conduct is confined solely to madmen and imbeciles.

If he belongs to either of these classes the sooner you are rid of him the better. It is too much of a responsibility for you to be forever trying to prevent a man from blowing his brains out. Until he declares his love and asks your hand in marriage there is no occasion for your being over careful of his feelings.

"I am greatly interested in your correspondence department, and although I am an old maid of thirty-five I write to ask you a serious question: Is an 'old maid' really such an object of ridicule as we are led to believe? I have been self-supporting for twenty years, and able to help many married women and children whose husbands and fathers could not support them. Is there not something else in the world just as praiseworthy as matrimony?"

MISS C."

We are delighted to get this honest letter! There is no woman more noble than a self-supporting, humanity-helping "old maid," and yet we must take exception to this term in your case. You are at the prime of life—the age when the average woman is most able and loveable. If it were not for the numbers of helpful women like yourself we shudder to think of what would become of some of the married women and children. We have seen whole families lean for mental, moral and financial support upon some "old maid aunt" or sister. The woman who has "hoed her own row" deserves the sympathy, admiration and respect of the entire universe. When she does marry she will be to her husband a "pearl beyond price," a helpmeet and companion whose value is inestimable.

"I am very much distressed over what you may deem a trifling matter; nevertheless, I am coming to you for advice, my dear Miss Shirley."

"I am engaged to be married to a very nice appearing young man, but on several occasions I have seen him kick dogs and cats, and as I am a great lover of animals, it has troubled me greatly. I am almost afraid to trust my happiness in his hands. Do you think I am foolish or a 'crank' for feeling as I do?"

ISABEL."

"A merciful man is merciful to his beast." No, we do not think you are foolish or a "crank." On the contrary, we are sure you are a very wise little woman.

The person who abuses an animal is more of a brute than the animal abused. We have no words in which to express our disgust of the monster. If you can not bring this young man to your way of thinking you would do well not to marry him.

"I am in deep trouble and need help. You have been so considerate of others that I know you will assist me in my misery.

"I am nearly twenty-five years old, and have been 'heart whole and fancy free' until this summer when I fell in love with a man who, unhappily for me, is already married, but who returns my love. We are both of us unhappy and miserable except on the few occasions when we can be alone together. I cannot think that I am right to love him, but at the same time I feel that I cannot give him up, and he says that he will never relinquish me. What can we do to improve our miserable position? FANNIE D. F."

Unfortunately, the story of your love is not an uncommon one. The little god Cupid is no respecter of persons or conditions, and he not infrequently works sad havoc with the peace and harmony of the family. We do not believe any one is to blame for falling in love, but we do not hesitate to say that a man and woman situated as you are are guilty of the gravest offense when you encourage an affection which can only result in misery to some one. Both men and women oftentimes marry hastily only to repent at leisure, but no self-respecting girl will allow herself to be to blame for that repentance if she can avoid it. We would advise you to discontinue meeting this man at once, as no good will come of your further acquaintance. Try and interest yourself in some worthy young man who has no obligations elsewhere, and in the end we are sure you will be much happier. If you find that you cannot overcome your love you can at least suffer and be brave, and so uphold the standard of honor in woman.

"Were you ever in love, Miss Shirley? For if you have been I know you will be able to understand my trouble. I have had a sort of understanding with a young man for nearly three years without our being actually engaged. Recently he has shown great attention to another girl, and I am left alone much of the time. None of the other fellows care to show me any attention as I have been so devoted to my lover that I have barely treated them civilly. I feel as if I had wasted all my best opportunities and had really no hope left in life. Can you not show me some way to win back my lover? IRENE S."

We are afraid that your own deportment has been your undoing. Evidently your attentions to the young man have been too pronounced and he has tired of the love which he held so easily. Owen Meredith says that "man's heart is like that delicate weed, that needs to be trampled on boldly indeed—ere it give forth the fragrance you wish to extract."

Perhaps if you had not shown such marked preference for his company you would have proven more interesting, as the spice of uncertainty is pleasing to most masculine natures. You had better treat his "change of heart" with total indifference, and perhaps in this way you will re-awaken his interest.

"I am a salesgirl in a large store and I have read 'My Queen, No. 1,' with a great deal of

pleasure. I wish I could meet a few girls like Marion Marlowe, but, alas! they do not often grow behind dry goods counters! Some of the girls I meet are nearly all very coarse in their manners, and a few of them are positively vulgar. Why is it that the girls or so many of them who work in the big stores are so dreadfully rude and use such shocking language? It seems to me that there is no excuse for using profanity or telling improper stories, and yet they are both common occurrences, especially in the lunch rooms. Can you not do something to make them different? Please scold them a little in your correspondence department.

"PRISCILLA S."

We are very sorry indeed to hear that your associates are so undesirable, but we think that instead of telling tales about them you should be talking to them kindly and urging them to be better. No good will ever come of scolding the girls, and Grace Shirley loves them far too dearly to ever scold them. The poor things inherit much of their wickedness, and their poverty-stricken, uncared-for lives have made them bitter. If you would read the story "For Gold or Soul" (No. 18 Street & Smith's Alliance Library), we think it would do you good. It will tell you how one young girl in a department store did a great deal of good, and in such a way that it made everybody love her. Do not set yourself up to be better than the girls, but just try to make them better in a gentle, Christ-like manner.

"I am receiving attentions from two young men who have both proposed marriage to me. They are very different in disposition, and I am at a loss which to decide upon. One of them is quite poor, but tries to do all he can for both my mother and myself, and when he is at our house to supper insists on helping me wipe the dishes, and little things like that. The other has a better position and more salary, but he turns up his nose at a man who does anything about the house, and always sits on the piazza and smokes until we are through the work. Mother says the first fellow is the best, but the last one seems more manly to me. Please tell me your opinion? "PAULINE B."

We quite agree with your mother's judgment. Some of the bravest men we know are the most thoughtful of trifles, and any little thing that a man can do to lighten the burdens of others is manly. We would not care to see a man wiping dishes or making beds for a living, but his ability to do these things does not detract from his manliness. Women help their husbands with their accounts, and in many of the so-called masculine vocations without losing an iota of their womanly charm. There is no reason why a husband should be less a man because he occasionally assists his wife in her household duties.

"Do you think it wrong for a wife to try to earn money? My husband's salary just barely supports us, and I have hard work to get any clothes, even with the greatest possible economy. I could earn several dollars a week teaching music, but my husband objects, and claims that if I work it will be a reflection upon him and that he will consider that I have deliberately insulted

him. He does the best he can, and gives me all he earns, but it is not enough for our needs. I will not deceive him about it, but would I be wronging him if I insisted upon earning my own pin money?
DOROTHY J."

We see no harm in a woman earning money if she desires. Your husband seems possessed of a peculiar kind of pride. If he is not able to support you properly he should place no obstacle in the way of your supporting yourself. Explain your motives to him freely and no doubt he will soon come to your way of thinking.

"Won't you advise me in a matter that is perplexing me? I had a quarrel with my sweetheart a week ago, and declared that I would never see him nor write to him again. Since we broke I have been most unhappy, and I am now firmly convinced that I love him and am anxious to have him back. He is as proud as can be, and I know he will never come unless I send for him. Do you think that I would lose his respect if I wrote him to come back or ought I to stick it out in spite of the fact that I love him. I have gotten all over my anger, but I do hate to break my word.
LULU H."

A victory over one's self is better than "sticking out" a foolish quarrel. It is far more womanly to forgive than not to if there is no real cause for anger, and to say "I was mistaken" is simply to say, "I am wiser to-day than yesterday." Your lover will probably value your sweetness of disposition more if you make the first advances towards reconciliation. A foolish resolution cannot be too quickly broken, but Grace Shirley's best advice is to try and avoid quarrels hereafter by both of you giving in a little at the start.

"I have read the correspondence department of 'My Queen' with a great deal of interest, and have decided at last to ask you a question. Has a poor girl a right to take money from a man when it is offered in the kindest and most gentlemanly spirit? I am working at present for six dollars a week and of course it is very difficult for me to live in comfort and still dress neatly. The young man whom I am engaged to knows my condition perfectly and until we are married he insists upon helping me. I have been roundly censured for accepting his aid, and that is why I ask my question.
CARRIE L."

We are very glad indeed to answer this question. The man who professes to love a girl and then sits calmly by and watches her struggle without so much as an offer of timely assistance is in our opinion a "mental monstrosity." Any lover with a heart in his breast will help the girl he loves, and the greater her necessities the greater will be his assistance. A self-respecting girl does not like to take financial aid, but she would be foolish to refuse it if it meant bread and butter. We are all "creatures of circumstance" and environment in great measure. Good positions are not to be had for the asking, nor is genuine worth and talent always rewarded. A true man always longs to protect the woman he loves, and no such man will ever be dissuaded from bestowing needed assistance because of the sickly

twaddle of narrow-minded people. Of course, the indiscriminate practice of taking money from men is quite another matter, as some men are only too glad to place a girl under obligations to them. A good girl can usually determine the motive of the giver, and we would advise her to be very careful in accepting such assistance.

"I have been engaged to a young man for a year, and I now discover that he has an invalid mother that he expects me to take care of as soon as we are married. I am very fond of my lover, but I am not very strong. Do you think it is my duty to marry him and make a slave of myself for the sake of his mother?
LIZZIE C."

No, we do not think it your duty, Lizzie. The man who loves you truly will never allow you to be a slave either to his mother or any one else. If his mother is an invalid, let him hire a nurse for her. A woman has quite enough to do to care for herself and her husband without looking out for any of his or her relatives. Too many homes have been spoiled already by these methods.

Talk to your lover kindly but decidedly, and let him understand your feelings exactly. If he says you do not love him you may depend upon it he is selfish. Ask him if he would be willing to do the same if the invalid was your mother. The average man does not seem to understand that it is quite enough for one woman to be a wife and keep her own little home in "apple-pie" order. You must educate him, but you will have to accomplish this with tact, else he will never admit it.

"Please allow me to tell you my 'tale of woe,' and then, if you can, I want you to advise me. I am almost sixteen, and I work in a store, but there is a rich man in town who says he wants to marry me. This man has bachelor apartments, and he has taken me to them twice. The rooms are beautiful, and I would dearly love to live there. I do not love him, but I would like to be his wife and live in those pretty rooms. The last time I was there he gave me some wine, and he says if I will come there and be his wife I can have everything lovely. Now, all this is nice, but he does not say when he will marry me. Do you think I can trust him to marry me at all? I shall be dreadfully disappointed if he doesn't, but if he wants me so badly, why doesn't he set the wedding-day and hurry our marriage?
ADA."

If you were a year younger, Ada, we would ask the Gerry Society to look after you! Please send me your address and let me come and talk to you, for I am very much afraid that you are on the high road to destruction. It seems incredible that a girl, even of your tender years, should not understand this man, and we wonder that you do not fly from him as you would from a pestilence. Please, Ada, do not go to his rooms again! You will rue it if you do, of that we are certain. We would also like you to send us this fellow's address, as we are sure he is a rascal and should be watched by the authorities. We only hope that your letter tells all. Do not fail to write again, and give us your address.

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